



World Catholic Association
for Social Communication

SIGNIS Asia FOCUS

5th SIGNIS East Asia Conference on 'Family and Stories of Hope'



In response to the deep concern on 'Family' by our Holy Father Pope Francis, a Two day conference on the theme '*Family and Stories of Hope*' was held at YMCA Asia Youth Centre, Tokyo, Japan on 11-12 November 2017.

Around 40 scholars and media professionals from East Asian countries (Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macau and Taiwan) participated in the event organized by SIGNIS Japan.

Mr. Tsuneaki Mac Machida, the Secretary of Signis Japan was the Chief Coordinator of the conference.

Media Ignore People!

The East Asia conference was officially started with a video recorded address by Most Rev. James Kazuo Koda, Auxiliary Bishop of Tokyo Archdiocese. He said, 'Through TV and other mass media, the present situations of Fukushima are reported very rarely nowadays and the people are worried whether they would be gradually forgotten by media! Actually, it is our job to receive the visitors who observe and listen to people in this areas and it is the mission of Caritas Minami-soma to transmit information from Fukushima'.

Challenges of East Asia!

The President of Signis Japan, Mr. Itaru Tsuchiya in his address quoted Pope Francis who said, 'Mass media tend to create daily

a 'vicious circle of anxiety'. Wars, terrorism, scandals and all sorts of human failures. It brings indifference, fear and create resignation among people. But there is another world. Shouldn't we direct our 'lens' to the 'good news' of Hope and Trust we can find around ourselves which the mass media does not bother, and communicate these to our societies?' Mr. Itaru said, 'Let's not treat 'family' in a narrow sense, but search for the challenges, common to East Asia such as children, youth, and the elderly persons'.

SIGNIS, a Bridge between Nations!

Rev. Ryohei MIYASHITA, the Secretary General of Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan said, 'Japan and South Korea have conflicts politically but we meet once a year and talk to each other which stands as testimony for our Relationship. SIGNIS is contributing to the communication between these two countries and may God and Holy Spirit bless all our initiatives'.

Let's Build Evangelic Families!

In his keynote address, Fr. Masahide Haresaku, the Advisor to SIGNIS Japan, expressed the need for the creation of 'Evangelic families' that are bonded by God and people without blood-relation, that gather together in the name of Jesus Christ, to



pray, help and share with one another. It is a family built on love, trust and honesty'.

Fr. Masahide added, 'let us always think, what will I do if the man in front of me is my family member of same blood, and act accordingly. In Japan, 99 % of the total population have not touched the Good News of Jesus, yet, the Church does not strive to open its doors and many parishes are not able to respond to the needs of the people asking for salvation'.

He concluded by saying, 'Jesus is the media connecting God with people, the media connecting people with people and thus the media creating a family of Christ. We, SIGNIS friends, firstly need to become a true family, pray together, talk together, take meals together, and become a sign of the Kingdom of God. Then we become the evangelic media, showing the potentials of evangelic family beyond blood.



This will become truly the Hope of this modern society. This is indeed the 'Family and Stories of Hope'.

Hong Kong: Decline in New- Weds number!

Delegates of each country presented their stories of 'family and hope' found in their respective countries. In Hong Kong, the number of newly-weds has been on decline during the past five years while, the number of marriages registered in the Church is even less. Ms. Catherine Wong, Producer at Hong Kong Diocesan

Audio Visual Centre presented the latest DVD series named 'The Marriage Vow & Covenant' in response to this phenomenon. She said that around 4,000 copies of this programme of 114 minutes, have been distributed to nearly 114 parishes so far in Hong Kong and Macau.

Korea: Chan-wool's Christmas!

As for Korea, Mr. Francis Kim, a highly experienced Radio Producer, illustrated 'Hope' through a radio program 'Chan wool's Christmas' on a visually challenged father who celebrates Christmas with his son. The program captures the precious moments between the father and son which crosses all boundaries, unmindful of all limitations.



Macau: Education and Therapeutic Intervention!

Dr. Filomena Chow, Secretary General of the Macau Catholic Family Advisory Council presented a case of a couple who sought therapy at the agency. She said, 'As the number of divorces and family relationship issues are on the rise in Macau, we focus on programmes on 'promotion of families and marital life' through education and counselling support, Marital preparation, Marriage Counselling, Remedial efforts for the renewal of Marital relationships etc.,

We follow the three tier preventive model with 1) Education, 2) Support and 3) Therapeutic intervention. Family is like a small Church. Family is the most important part in the social structure and Love is the key factor in Life'.

Taiwan: Jesus, the Centre of Families!

In Taiwan, the family service unit of Divine World Missionaries offer similar counselling service for married couples. Apart from that, Fr. James Huang, the Director of the unit further explained activities and courses that are being organized in order to promote family and marital life.

He said, 'We express our compassion and love so that we can build up trusting relationship with people. Word of God is able to guide them and heal their hearts.



The life experience become spiritual experience. Love each other as Jesus loves you. Jesus is the centre of the families. Let us build the kingdom of God'.

He also shared about video programs based on Bible scripture and families to encourage dialogue and mutual understanding among family members.

Japan: A Country of Aging Society!

Mr. Itaru Tsuchiya, of Japan presented the latest statistics which predicts that in 2025, over one third of the total population in Japan would be over 65 years of age. Japan is entering into an aging society with low birth rate. The working environment is



harsh with increase in working hours but with same wage patterns. It affects family lives as both husband and wife need to get jobs to meet the family expenses. The suicide rate of the youth has become relatively high and cases of bullying, discrimination and harassment severed. In addition, disasters make the situation worse.

Welcome to 'Come on home to SATO' A Home for the Children!

Followed by the sharing of member countries, the Japanese

documentary 'Welcome to Sato' was screened. The film depicts the development of a 'Sato' (a home for children) and the impact it creates in the local community, bringing a change in the



families and lives of children. The film documented well the case of Naomi who grew up in the Children's Home from third grade onwards, has now become independent and gives around 30,000 yen every month to her mother to feed her. The Children's Home offers children a playground, foster care and Counselling services.

Family Activists Speak!

On the Second day, a plenary discussion was moderated by Dr. Magimai Pragasam during which 1) Ms. Tomoko SHOHO, a children's rights activist and the Chief Trustee of NPO Kodomo-



no-Sato, 2) Ms. Maki SHIRAHATA, who runs a house for children and youth facing difficulties in life, and 3) Ms. Junko AIZAWA, Leader, Welfare Division, Katase Catholic Church and representative, Team Church, 'Maria Shokudo' a children's canteen shared their rich experiences.



Advocacy too is our job!

Delegates too shared their viewpoints. 'Are we not doing the work of the government instead of empowering people to demand their needs?' asked a delegate. 'The government is busy with vote bank politics rather than answering poor people's needs, hence, we need to intervene' was another view expressed during the discussion. Dr. Magi deeply appreciated all three presenters for their service to humanity saying, 'you are doing God's work, may God bless you abundantly for all your good work and strengthen your efforts'.

Action Plans

Then, the delegates were divided into three groups to prepare an action plan for the future. What are the most important challenges faced by families in East Asia? How can we share the stories of hope with people and what are the tools to be employed? were the questions for discussion.

Dr. Magi recorded the points presented by the group leaders:

- *Let us share our opinions and experiences with like-minded people to gather strength.*
- *The Church, Government and NGOs are helping the poor. The Media should highlight all stories of hope along with issues.*
- *We need to capture the imagination of the younger generation.*
- *Let's create space in the internet and use all available resources to inform, educate, inspire and encourage people to engage in action and share stories of hope.*
- *We need to use all media, especially the Social networks to reach out to local communities, in particular, the smart phone applications.*
- *Mobile phone attracts both young and the old.*
- *Let's use youtube, facebook, and Instagram to share our messages.*
- *We need to use newspapers as it continues to be a powerful medium.*

- *Let's be aware of the situations, study the culture, go out and collect stories, identify target groups and share stories of hope.*
- *We can also use community theatre which remains close to people and can powerfully communicate the message.*
- *We need to be professionals, equip ourselves, maintain quality and standard in our communication efforts.*
- *Content is very important. We need to be short, sharp and communicate in a penetrating manner.*
- *We need to produce and promote films on poverty and strategies to overcome poverty.*
- *We need to organise and participate in film festivals for Advocacy purposes.*

The Summary:

As East Asia is advanced in communication technology, smartphone applications and internet, they could be used as powerful platforms to share the stories of hope. The other strategies include 'organizing film shows regularly in the community and using theatre to reach out to the general public.

We need to cater to people's hearts rather than their brains. We need to engage in heart level communication, build a wider network of professionals and share our resources and experiences. Our approach should not be 'hit and run' but 'stay and engage' with the community, speaking their language. Advocacy effort are equally important as issues need to reach policy makers.

Inspiring Deliberations!

The action plans presented by all three groups seemed practical and relevant. The delegates expressed that we need to work together on a long term basis. The 5th SIGNIS East Asian conference was sponsored by SIGNIS ASIA and organized by a team of SIGNIS Japan led by Mr. Tsuneaki Mac Machida and Mr. Itaru TSUCHIYA along with members of Signis Japan and volunteers.

- By **Catherine WONG** (Hong Kong) and **Dr. Magimai PRAGASAM** (India)

We are **present in 140 countries** both as representatives of



SIGNIS Today!



official Church bodies and as independent lay people engaged in media on every level.

We are **culturally diverse**, and rich because of it. We **reach the periphery**; in fact we ARE the periphery in many instances.

We bring **professional communications skills** in an information age when **the new infrastructure of evangelization** is built on old and new media.

In the digital domain we integrate the best of radio, television, cinema, video, media education, journalism, and social media.

We engage secular culture, in its many manifestations, by professional engagement in it: honoring the best of commercial productions (Film and TV awards), producing what is otherwise overlooked in the marketplace, reporting and publishing news for many constituencies, educating discerning consumers of media and culture, participating in new social media as they emerge.

Our Challenges

1. **Networking.** We must be better connected with one another, from the grassroots to the world headquarters. A single thread becomes powerful as it is woven into a mighty rope. We must have a mechanism to hear from the grassroots.

2. **Church recognition.** Despite our long 90-year history and thorough integration into the Church at local levels on a global basis, we need to be better known and appreciated at the

episcopal and Vatican levels.

3. **Systematic Communications.** We must strive to speak coherently with clear messages in visual and audio language accessible and appealing to our audiences. Our Brussels office must execute a comprehensive communications plan.

4. **Journalism.** SIGNIS, traditionally dedicated to film and television, must embrace and integrate journalists. We must be prophets in an age challenged by the concept of “fake news” and the validity of truth.

5. **Fundraising.** We must find new ways to solve the financial demands of running a world organization.

6. **Women.** We must provide more leadership opportunities for women.

7. **Youth.** We must engage the next generation of communicators.

The New Leadership

President: Helen Osman, SIGNIS North America

Vice-President: Lawrence John (ElJay) Sinniah, SIGNIS ASIA

Vice-President: Paul Samasumo, SIGNIS Africa

General Treasurer, Emmanuel Bonnet, SIGNIS Europe

Secretary General, Ricardo Yanez, SIGNIS Latin America

The Team

Helen Osman brings years of experience with SIGNIS, the hierarchical Church, journalism, digital media, public relations, corporate planning, and fundraising.

After serving as editor and communications director in her home Diocese of Austin, Texas, for more than 20 years, Osman became



the chief communications officer of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, serving in the post from 2007 to 2015. She was responsible for organizing media preparations for the visits of Pope Benedict XVI in 2008 and of Pope Francis in 2015. She has been secretary and president of the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada, the only person in the history of the Catholic Academy of Communication Arts Professionals to receive its Clarion Award more than once, and a recipient of the CPA's lifetime achievement honor, the St. Francis de Sales Award. Osman currently lives in Austin, where she is a communications consultant for the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops and others.

ElJay Sinniah, of Malaysia, brings a wealth of experience with SIGNIS, public relations, design, media education, and the Church to his office as Vice-President. As VP for the past three years he has seen SIGNIS from the inside and his corporate memory of the administrative needs and growth of SIGNIS is of particular importance. He also conceived and implemented new training experiences in SIGNIS for youth (COMMLab).

Paul Samasumo not only exercised top leadership and communications skills in his home country of Zambia, but has applied those talents and skills to the universal Church through his employment at Vatican Radio. He is head of Vatican Radio's English Africa Service as well as the Swahili language Programme, since 2014. The fact that he now resides in Rome is an additional benefit to the close communication possible between this VP and the Brussels office.

Ricardo Yáñez studied Communication Sciences at the

University of Buenos Aires (UBA). In his native country he worked as youth leader, journalist, secondary school teacher and media education facilitator for 16 years. For nine years, he worked at the Social Communications Commission of the Bishops' Conference of Argentina. He was founder and Board member of OCIC (1998) and SIGNIS (2002) in Argentina. He coordinated TV desks and organized TV seminars across the Globe. He has been a juror in many ecumenical and Signis juries at international film festivals.

Emmanuel Bonnet is Director General of the French Catholic television station CFRT (*Comité Français de Radio-Télévision*), and currently serves as treasurer of SIGNIS Europe. His knowledge of financial management is impeccable, and the fact that he lives within a short train trip of Brussels is a major asset.

- Frank Frost & Larry Rich

'As officers of SIGNIS, we will focus on strengthening the global networking capacity of SIGNIS, so its members can benefit from a connectivity of ideas, inspiration and collaboration, thereby fulfilling the mission of SIGNIS to help transform our cultures in the light of the Gospel.'

- SIGNIS World President Helen Osman.

SIGNIS SOUTH ASIA TRAINING OF TRAINERS IN 'SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION'



We are in 'Digital Age' wherein our younger generation use internet, mobile phone, digital music, digital cameras and various types of social media for sharing their ideas, interests and experiences. They need to access information from social media, evaluate them and use them appropriately for their personal and the growth of their communities. They also need to be aware of negative impact of Social media and safety measures so that they can safeguard themselves.

Social Media Education

Social media offers ample opportunities for young people to learn, develop skills, publish, run campaigns and take up advocacy initiatives very creatively.

Hence, to enhance the training skills of media educators in sharing information on social media, especially, with the youth of South Asian countries, a Training of Trainers (TOT) programme was organised by Signis South Asia in Subhodhi Institute, Sri Lanka from 12-18th August 2017. Seventeen participants from five countries India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka participated in the programme.

The Facilitators

The team of facilitators with Dr. Magimai Pragasam, India (Coordinator of the programme) Rev. Dr. John Edapilli, India, Fr. Quaiser, Pakistan, and Fr. Lal Pushpadeva, Sri Lanka conducted the programme. Fr. Lal Pushpadeva Fernando, the President of Signis Sri Lanka was the local host. The venue was a beautiful place surrounded by trees and plants, river and scenic beauty made our learning a memorable one.

Objectives of the Workshop

The training was based on the book 'Social Media Education Trainer's Manual' Edited by Dr. Magimai Pragasam. The book has 16 topics with supporting content for a class room teaching.

The Overall Objective of the Workshop were:

1. To explore the world of Social Media
2. To discover various training tools
3. To undergo a Practical experience of conducting training sessions
4. To develop creative skills to face challenges and build a network of trainers

The Focus of Learning

The training had a focus for each day:

Day 1: Explore the world of social media

Day 2: Identify and Apply training Skills and Techniques

Day 3: Experiential learning through practical sessions.

Day 4: Planning for future and follow up.

Methodology

There were many effective methodologies used to make the learning process interesting and participatory. There were short input sessions, group and individual exercises, presentations and video evaluations, practical sessions, games, large and small group discussions.



The Content

The first day began with a brief introduction of the objectives and aims of the training programme by Dr. Magimai Pragasam followed by a very interactive ice breaker.

The input session began with Mr. Sajana Hottotuwa, a journalist and activist from Sri Lanka who shared on the Advocacy Strategies and Tools of Social Media. His sharing was supported by personal experiences with Government officials, activists, youth, NGOs and various media professionals.



Mr. Sanjana Hottotuwa

Pope Francis has 4.4 million followers in Instagram. He spreads hope and love through Social media. He focuses on war zones and refugees. 'Hate - Hurt Harm' can spread through Social Media fast. Anti-social elements and terrorists are using Social media effectively for recruitment of their cadres. Young people in South Asia are shaping their minds through Social media. Consumption of Social Media is larger than Media Literacy. He also explained on how social media has outgrown all other older media like TV, Newspapers, Radio and television which were highly controlled, governed and manipulated by government and media giants.

Mr. Sanjana also shared many useful links and resources available in the internet to be used for training programmes.

Rev. Dr. John Edapilly

On the second day, Rev. Dr. John Edapally dealt with the theme

'Social Media A Magnificent Blessing or Malicious Bleeding?'

He said that the basic requirement for a trainer is to understand the need, passion, problems and perceptions of the trainee. He said, 'Social Media has virtually influenced every aspect of life. It's speed and growth is phenomenon. Around 78% of the internet content is non-English! Social media has transformed people's attitude. Nowadays we don't have to search for news. But, news search us and come to us'. Dr. Edpappilly used many resourceful video clippings to drive across the message and also offered very useful links for further search.



Dr. Magimai

The third day was totally devoted to teaching methodologies and teaching techniques handled by Dr. Magimai. He made sure to drive his points with many practical demonstrations, powerful video clips and exercises to test our Sensory Styles.

Some of the crucial 'Take Home Points' from this session include:

Make sure that you are well prepared for every session. Use the right brain (creative brain) more with songs, music, games, exercises etc to make the learning creative and interesting than the left brain (logical brain) that involve text, data etc., Always include a 'de-briefing' after every video clip screening and make the sessions more interactive with questions, feedback, appreciation and small tasks.





The whole session was full of life and everyone participated very actively with total involvement.

Fr. Qaisar

The next session was on 'Media Convergence' handled by Fr. Qaisar of Pakistan. He reiterated the para-linguistic and constant update of a trainer in his / her focus area. The Content- Design - Delivery must be prepared based on a sound research and all



materials need to be organised in a balanced manner to gain synergy.

Every speech or lecture should cater to the hearts of the people with modulation of voice and clarity in communication.

Practical sessions

After the input sessions, participants were divided into three groups and given the task of choosing a topic from the 'Trainer's Manual' and design a model session using all the techniques learnt from the programme such as 'Setting a sign post, using a video / audio clip, games, small and large group discussion, using relevant tools etc.,' The three model sessions were designed for a 3 hour, 6 hour and 12 hour sessions.

The participants enjoyed the session as it demanded meticulous planning and application of creativity.

Demonstration and Feedback

After an extensive preparation in groups, the stage was set for demonstration. Dr. Magimai coordinated the session with Rev. Dr. John Edapilly, Fr. Lal Pushpadewa and Fr. Quaisar function as evaluators. All three demonstrations were videotaped and shown one by one to the participants so that it could be viewed even by the presenters. All three groups exhibited their skills and competencies explicitly.

The evaluators gave encouraging feedback and also commented on the areas for improvement. Each participant was later awarded a certificate of participation.

Key Learning from the Programme

Social media are gift from God to Entertain, Educate and Enhance relationships. Loads of resources are available in the internet for use as tools. A well prepared 'Content Design Delivery' format will send the message across effectively and bring changes among the student community. Let us use familiar tools and techniques to grab the attention of young minds. De-briefing is necessary for every audio/video clip we use to communicate the message.

The Learning was intense and Living together was Cordial

Right through the programme there existed a cordial and friendly relationship among the participants and organisers. Fr. Lal and his team were always ready to help us with our needs. The fellowship and friendship grew much deeper on the day of outing. We were privileged to visit the parliament house and Buddhist temples, and finally dip our feet in the Ocean.

All participants left highly motivated and committed to share and conduct similar programmes in their respective countries.

- By Mr. A. Nirmal Raj, Bangalore, India.



The New SIGNIS Asia Board 2017-21

**SA Board Member: Catherine Vi Cao - Vietnam**

Vi Cao joined SIGNIS as a young Video Journalist during the SIGNIS World Congress 2009 in Chang Mai, Thailand. Since then she has been actively involved in SIGNIS VJ/Artisan/Commlab programs in Asia and other region. She volunteers with the Jesuits Communications Department to organize and facilitate youth communication programs in Vietnam. She works full-time with a non-profit organization called LIN Center helping local people to meet local needs. Her passion to communicate with young people has made her a highly skilled trainer and facilitator.

SA Board Member: Adeline James - Malaysia

Adeline is a Creative Director with Public Media Agency, an NGO that promotes, community-communication-change. She brings with her years of expertise in visual communications and works with a team to regularly develop campaigns for social change for local and international organisations. She is known for professionalism and dedication towards the tasks she is commissioned. Adeline joined SIGNIS Malaysia in 2001 and since then has assisted in several communications program of SIGNIS and the local church. She is a design graduate from Lim Kok Wings University, Malaysia.

Treasurer: Francis Kim Seung Wal - Korea

Kim is the current Treasurer for the SA board. He is a professional Radio Broadcaster who worked in MBC, the most influential radio station in Korea for over 30 years. He has written and published several books and articles on Radio. His latest book is 'Production and Usage of Audio Contents in Digital Age'. Most recently Kim compiled and published a guidebook on how to keep accounts for SIGNIS Asia projects by SIGNIS members.

He takes his treasurers job very seriously and has brought transparency to SIGNIS Asia projects.

Secretary: Ms. Bernadette Widiandajani - Indonesia

Ms. Widi runs an NGO and as a social worker and community organizer for CSR projects in Indonesia, she conducts health related training programmes. She heads Radio desk in SAB. As the Secretary of SA, she screens the projects along with the Screening Committee. In the past, she has worked as an accounts officer in Puskat AV Centre in Indonesia for over seventeen years.

Vice President: Dr. Magimai Pragasam - India

Dr. Magi holds a doctorate in Communications and Anthropology. He studied media at University of Leeds, UK and CREC-AVEX in France and has been working as a Media Educator, Documentary Film producer, Researcher and has held numerous workshops in Asia in communications for Church, Government and NGO institutions. He also holds two Master Degrees in Journalism and Sociology obtained in Indian universities. He is the editor of the Newsletter 'SIGNIS Asia Focus' for SAB and heads the Media Education Desk.

President: Fr. Joseph Anucha - Thailand

Fr. Joseph is the Director of Catholic Social Communications office in Thailand. He manages the production unit, organises the Media Awards and publishes the Catholic News in Thailand. As a committed journalist, he has extensively covered news on Church in Asia. Currently he heads the SIGNIS World Digital Media Desk. He wrote on Pope's visit to Thailand extensively. He produces a series of videos and television programmes on Gospel values and culture.

'Collaboration is my Theme' says SIGNIS World President Ms. Helen Osman!

(Signis Asia Treasurer **Francis Kim** interviewed our newly elected World President **Ms. Helen Osman** during the World Congress in Quebec)

Kim: Congratulations on your election as the new President! I suppose you are the first woman president?

Osman: That is my understanding.

Kim: What do you think should be the top priority of SIGNIS these days?

Osman: I think we must first be attempting to listen to one another to understand what we are doing, to contribute to building up the Church, to remember what the Holy Father is reminding us, that communication is about encounter, dialogue and coming together. I think SIGNIS can provide not only bridges for people but also perhaps what they need to cross those bridges to meet one another and to work together.

Kim: What is the most important challenge for Catholic Communicators in this digital era?

Osman: I think we have many challenges. Perhaps one of the important challenges, especially in the developed countries like North America and Western Europe would be, people don't see the Church as a place for hope for inspiration. I think it is a direct challenge for Catholic communicators. How do we inspire people? How do we get them hope? How do we tell them the stories of hope?

Kim: What is your main aim for your term?

Osman: I believe we have many good and strong programmes and we have many people who are dedicated to Catholic communication. I know that SIGNIS Asia is one of the most robust regions in SIGNIS World. It has deep roots and it is rich in resources. But how do we share those resources? How do we work together? So, my theme could be collaboration.

Kim: What do you think of Korea as the venue for SIGNIS World Congress in 2021?

Osman: I think it would be a wonderful experience for the members of SIGNIS World to experience the Church of Korea, to

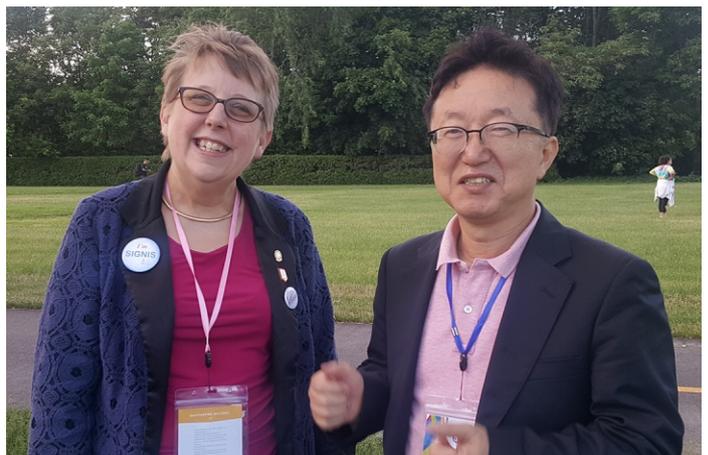


(Photo Credit : Nancy Phelan Wiechec / CNS)

experience Asia and to get deep understanding of the universality of the Church. I think Korean Church has much to tell the rest of the world.

Kim: Your message to members of SIGNIS Korea?

Osman: Thank you for your generous invitation, for extending your hospitality to all of us and I look forward to meeting you in Seoul. And I ask you to pray for us, for your fellow SIGNIS members as I pray for you. Let us continue our attempt to build the Church of Christ, here on earth!



Francis Kim with World President

Radio Journalists on a Indo-Nepal Friendship Tour



Radio Salesian RJs getting ready for Indo-Nepal Friendship Tour.

A college community radio in Darjeeling hills plans to set out on a historic "Indo-Nepal Friendship Tour" with a team of Radio Journalists visiting 7 institutions in Nepal managed by alumni of Salesian College Sonada (SCS) to mark its 80th year celebrations as well as 25th year of Don Bosco Society in Nepal.

The road show also marks first anniversary of Radio Salesian - first college radio in Bengal and entire northeast India. The tour on Radio Salesian Maruti Omni Van is scheduled to start on Sunday 7th January from Sonada passing through Indo-Nepal Kakrabitta border near Siliguri and proceed to Dharan from where Don Bosco Centre Nepal started and reach Kathmandu in West Nepal.

The team members are: Station Director and Vice-Principal Prof. C.M. Paul along with Programme Coordinator RJ Samir Chhetri, senior RJ Sagar Rai and driver Kabi Rai.

"The week-long programme will consist of visiting Don Bosco Institutions, as well as visiting plus two (senior secondary) schools along the way (Kakrabitta, Birtamod, Dharan, Biratnagar, Ithari and Kathmandu) to promote higher education in Salesian College Darjeeling and Siliguri campus," says SCS Vice-principal Prof. Paul.

Radio Journalist Mr Chhetri adds, "We will also make radio programs on 25 years of Nepal Don Bosco Society and interact with Community Radio stations especially in Dharan - the cradle of Don Bosco Society in Nepal."

The history of Nepal Don Bosco Society began in 1992 with Dharan centre, in eastern Nepal, initiated by late Fr George

Alakulam who ventured out from Don Bosco School Mirik then under the care of SCS. The Salesians today have seven houses, managed by 19 Salesians from various states in India.

The Nepal Don Bosco Society is engaged in a variety of ministries dedicated to the country's young people - two technical schools, four academic schools, three social outreach centers,

four boarding houses, and several non-formal education centers..

They also run a number of social programs, such as scholarships for students and emergency response projects like the aftermath of the tragic earthquakes of 2015.



According to the 2011 census, 81.3% of the Nepalese population was Hindu, 9.0% was Buddhist, 4.4% was Muslim, 3.0% was Kiratist (indigenous ethnic religion), 1.4% was Christian, 0.2% was Sikhs, 0.1% was Jains and 0.6% follow other religions or no religion. There are some 7,000 Catholics out of approximately 29 million people.

- By Prof. CM Paul

(For More Info: <Radiosalesian@gmail.com>)

Sr. Rani Maria is Declared 'Blessed'



The Beatification Ceremony of Sr. Rani Maria began at 9.00 am on Saturday, November 4, 2017 at St. Paul Higher Secondary School ground, Indore, MP. Nearly 12,000 people from all over India and abroad gathered to witness the event that took place for the first time in North India.

The representative of Pope Francis, Cardinal Angelo Amato declared Sr. Rani Maria as 'Blessed Rani Maria'. Today, the whole Universal Church sees her as an inspirational person and prays through her intercession to God.

The Apostolic Nuncio Most Rev. Giambattista Diquattro from Delhi, Nunciature Msgr. Henry Jagodzinsk from Delhi, Cardinal Mar Baselios Cleemis from Trivandrum, Cardinal Telesphore Toppo from Ranchi, Cardinal Oswald Gracias from Mumbai, Cardinal Mar George Alencherry from Ernakulam besides ten Archbishops, 60 Bishops and nearly thousand priests and nuns from all over India were the dignitaries present on the occasion.

The Apostolic Letter (Litterae Apostolicae in Latin) of Pope Francis was read by Cardinal Angelo Amato and the English and Hindi by Cardinal Mar George Alencherry and Cardinal Telesphore Toppo.

During Holy Eucharist, Cardinal Amato said, 'Sr. Rani Maria's martyrdom is a blessing for the Indian Catholic Church. She died to defend Gospel values. Her social apostolate was for the service of the needy. Her prayers to Jesus kept her firm in holiness and spirituality. She also used to pray through the intercession of St. Alphonsa'. The highlight of the entire ceremony include the solemn declaration to Blessed hood, unveiling of the statue, releasing of the relic of Sr. Rani Maria, blessing of her portrait and screening of a short film based on her life.

The songs and cultural programmes were a treat to the people present for the ceremony followed by lunch for everyone. People were filled with spiritual fervor and enthusiasm all through the ceremony.



In 2002, when Sr. Selmy, the younger sister of Blessed Sr. Rani Maria, who forgave the murderer Mr. Samunder Singh, met him in Indore Central jail on a day of Raksha Bandhan, he was repeatedly asking for forgiveness for his sin. Through the kind gesture of tying a Rakhi on his wrist, Sr. Selmy, changed his heart and mind. She said, 'All of us have forgiven you. Do not keep anything in your heart. Be good to everyone'. Sr. Rani Maria worked for the empowerment of tribal communities. Once she told Sr. Selmy, 'I want to work for the poor till my last breath'

The religious nun was 41 when Mr. Samunder Singh, hired by a few landlords, stabbed her inside a bus on 25th February, 1995, 22



Franciscan Clarist Sisters pray at Sr.Rani Maria's grave

years ago. The attacker followed her while she was travelling to Indore in the crowded bus and stabbed her 54 times. She died on the roadside at Nachanbore Hill, near Indore, Madhya Pradesh, northern part of India.



Sr. Rani Maria's father and mother forgiving the murderer

After 11 years and six months, Samunder Singh was released on probation in August 2006. In January 2007, Singh visited Sr. Rani Maria's family in Pulluvazhy, Kerala. From then on, Samunder had become close to the family. Once Sr. Selmy asked him, 'how do you feel when you pray at her grave?'. He said, 'I was scared initially, but later, found the presence of a divine power there'. Sr. Selmy feels Samunder is now a changed man and has received 'forgiving grace' through Sr. Rani Maria.

**-By Fr. John Paul, President, Indore Christian Media Forum
& Mr. Sumit Dhanraj, Member, Indore Christian Media Forum
SIGNIS INDIA Members.**



Social Media Education Trainer's Manual

For Media Education Trainers

Edited by **Dr. Magimai Pragasam**



SIGNIS South Asia - SIGNIS Asia

Media education has been one of the key activities of SIGNIS for several decades. Its importance keeps increasing as the Mass Media is being used by business interests more than ever before. Commercialisation of the media industry has become very common and open today. One of its crucial impacts is the destabilisation of the values system in society. Children are the worst affected by the negative content and commercialisation of media.

SIGNIS South Asia has published a useful Trainer's Manual to equip teachers to impart social media education to students and children. Meeting the need of the hour, this manual is the outcome of two workshops held in India and Sri Lanka.

I request SIGNIS members to encourage teachers, social workers and facilitators to use this resource manual to create an awareness among the younger generation so that they use social media appropriately for self-growth, and for the unity and development of the community and society.

Lawrence John
Vice President, SIGNIS
Chair, SIGNIS Media Education Desk

The contribution of SIGNIS in imparting Media Education for the youth and children in the world has been significant. The process started with 'Media Literacy' in the beginning, moved to 'Media Education' later and reached 'Beyond Media Education' over a period of time.

Numerous experiments, books, research materials, videos, audio programmes, training manuals have been produced by various institutions and individuals across the world on Media Education.

Now, it is time that we focus on 'Social Media Education' too, as it is difficult to think of today's youth and children without Social Media.

Dr. A. Magimai Pragasam
Coordinator, SSA Common Project on Social Media Education
Coordinator, Media Education Desk, SAB and Editor

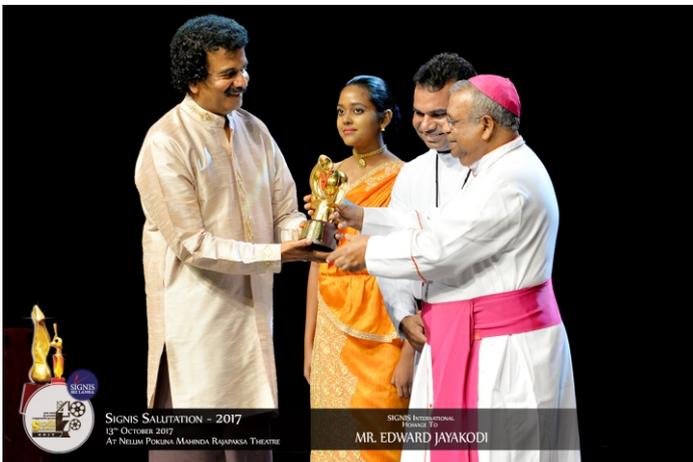
SIGNIS Sri Lanka Promotes National Cinematic Tradition

40th SIGNIS Salutation - 2017

Seventieth years of Sri Lankan Cinema

The 40th SIGNIS Salutation 2017 Awards Ceremony was held on the 13th October 2017 at the Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

His Excellency Pierre Nguyen Van Tot, Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See and the President of Sri Lankan Bishops' Conference, Most Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando honoured the occasion. *Their presence at this ceremony as Chief Guests certainly inspired the entire film and media world.*



Renowned and veteran Film Director, Mr. Lester James Peris, probably the most aged living Film Director in the world (99 years old and Catholic) was honoured in the Ceremony as we felicitate 70th year of the Sri Lankan Cinema. Bishop Raymond Wickramasinghe, Chairman of the National Catholic Commission for Social Communications in Sri Lanka and seven other Bishops graced the event.

Sri Lankan cinema has reached the prestigious and venerable age of 70, with a seven decade long record of highly significant achievements that have earned noteworthy, kudos both at national and international level. The remarkable outcome of this development is that Sri Lanka's National cinematic tradition can have a prominent place in the global community of national cinematic traditions.

At SIGNIS, we are justly proud to have enriched and promoted Sri Lanka's national cinematic tradition over a good part of its long and eventful history. During its colourful span of 40 memorable years, SIGNIS has made a substantial and highly impactful contribution to Sri Lankan cinematic tradition.

We pursued our unerring aim of elevating the stature of indigenous cinema through an extensive range of initiatives. SIGNIS introduced the key-note address system. Post festival dialogue with film enthusiasts was a welcome innovation. SIGNIS encouraged a responsible and authoritative film literature by introducing annual awards for those who created such works. SIGNIS has always recognized and honoured those who have made a lasting contribution towards the proper and distinct evolution of Sri Lankan cinema and television.

-By Fr. W. N. Lal Pushpadewa Fernando OMI

President SIGNIS Sri Lanka, National Director for Catholic
Social Communication, Sri Lanka.



A Note from the Editor

Dear Friends,

Greetings!

SAF wishes you a VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR 2018! May the New Year bring lots of joy, good health, hope, success and peace into our lives!

We have new team of officers both at World and Asian levels! Let's wish them all success in their mission!

The conference on 'Family and Stories of Hope' held in Japan and Workshop on 'Social Media Education' held in Sri Lanka are two major training programmes of Signis Asia in the recent past and a detailed account of both the events are presented in this issue. The SIGNIS Asia Country Presidents and members are requested to send interesting stories that can inspire our friends across Asia!

Wishing you all success in all your endeavours,
Warm regards,

Dr. Magimai Pragasam
Editor, Signis Asia Focus.

SIGNIS ASIA FOCUS

Publisher

Fr. Joseph Anucha

Editor

Dr. A. Magimai Pragasam

Editorial Board

Ms. Bernadetta Widiandajani (Indonesia)

Mr. Francis Kim Seung-wal (Korea)

Ms. Catherine Vi Cao (Vietnam)

Ms. Adeline James (Malaysia)

SIGNIS Asia Focus is an E-Newsletter of SIGNIS ASIA which is published four times a year (July, October, January and April from Chennai, India. Members are kindly requested to share News and Views, programmes and productions in SIGNIS ASIA FOCUS.

Kindly send your materials to <magimai2005@gmail.com>



SIGNIS Asia Board

- President : Fr. Joseph Anucha (Thailand)
- Vice President : Dr. Magimai Pragasam (India)
- Secretary : Ms. Bernadetta Widiandajani (Indonesia)
- Treasurer : Mr. Francis Kim Seung-wal (Korea)
- Members : Ms. Catherine Vi Cao (Vietnam)
Ms. Adeline James (Malaysia)

SIGNIS Asia Screening Committee

- Mr. Francisco Lio (Macau)
- Fr. Lal Pushpadewa (Sri Lanka)
- Ms. Bernadetta Widiandajani (Indonesia)

SIGNIS Asia Desks

Cinema

Adeline James

Television

Francis Kim Seung-wal

Radio

Bernadetta Widiandajani

Journalism & CommLab

Catherine Vi Cao

Digital Media

Fr. Joseph Anucha

Media Education & SAMA Awards

Dr. Magimai Pragasam




**Production
And
Usage
Of
Audio
Contents**
In the Digital Era

In this digital era, radio can find a new opportunity as an audio content, as there are various platforms to distribute audio contents via the internet.

Seungwal Francis Kim, Author

By virtue of a magic combination of words, music, sound effects and silent pauses, radio has stayed with us for a century and will still be around for a very, very long time.

Dr. Gustavo Andújar, President of SIGNIS

FM and community radio stations are mushrooming and audio streaming and other audio on demand service over the internet are increasingly popular in many of Asian countries.

Fr. Gabriel Htun Myint, President of SIGNIS Asia

