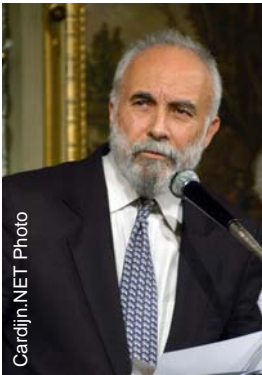


Church that Won't be Silenced



At Pentecost the disciples were animated with the passion and ability to speak out in diverse ways. In 2005 YCS members in Parramatta and Melbourne, Australia, and ex-YCS member Chiko Whitaker, marked Pentecost with dialogue and debate, as part of an event called "New Pentecost: A Church that Won't be Silenced!"

"A Church that Won't be Silenced!" brought together Church movements and groups committed to social justice for a day of challenging workshops and seminars covering topics like 'Church in a democracy' and 'Democracy in the Church'.

On the first subject, Chiko emphasized that while elections are important, they alone do not make a true democracy. Chiko urged Christians to be unafraid to speak out on so-called "political" issues like poverty.

Later Chiko described what he saw as the six important ways to be Church:

1. *Living fraternally* (community)
2. *Deepening* our understanding of why we live this way (theology)
3. *Telling* others (evangelisation)
4. *Celebrating* the way we live (liturgy)
5. *Reaching out* to others (ecumenism)
6. *Social Transformation*

Chiko went on to warn Christians not to ignore aspects of this mission. If we are not living, reaching, transforming, what have we to deepen, tell, celebrate?

Meeting Chiko gave YCSers a taste of things to come. Over dinner after the forum, Chiko cited his involvement with YCS (JEC) as a university student in Brazil as a major moment in his development as a social activist and thinker. From his YCS days and his involvement with the Brazilian Bishop's conference, Chiko went on to be a founder of the World Social Forum.

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Our faith and formation lies in the very core of our upbringing

"Our God is an awesome God, our God is universal. " Very often we hear these words when we believe our faith has caused a change. Every religion believes in a super-natural being; the Almighty. The forms and rituals vary, the beliefs remaining the same. Each group has its own way of worshipping and praising God for all the marvels worked.

YCS/YSM India is a kaleidoscope of students from different faiths and backgrounds. We in the movement believe that our spirituality always forms students for their ultimate journey, life. How is this done? All students come together with one single aim: 'to build a better society'. Inter-religious dialogue and prayer services help the members to learn about and to respect other religions and their practices.

In today's world of trials and tribulations what message do our young students carry forward? The belief is that when young minds and hearts come together to form one generation, our elders will also give up their thirst for caste and religion. 'Thirst for caste and religion' implies that the fanatic feeling of 'I and my Religion' changes to 'I, my brother and one humanity'. India has witnessed major communal riots in the past few decades. Our freedom struggle is known for its non-violence. In a land of rivers, forests, milk and honey today flows streams of blood and agony. Our generation seeks to change this using the principle of the amalgamation of ideas of different religions.

Our Christian beliefs and values have transformed the lives of many. One of my Hindu friends once said 'I know its Jesus who is working wonders in me'. Till today these words tell me that Jesus causes a change in the bottom of every heart that trusts in His presence. During our camps and councils, though we do have inter-religious services, we stress on the need to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. We do not get any objection to this. Definitely, this shows that our Christian values and beliefs are accepted. Accepted to bring a transformation in society, a revolution to change the scene around, a war to win the battle over evil and a movement to win the hearts of all humanity.

With these thoughts, we carry forward the message of peace and love, of good and truth, of life and successful living. Our faith and formation lies in the very core of our upbringing. Every member who finds a true experience in YCS/YSM has found a way of life for the better.

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