

REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR: SENATE OF SERAMPORE COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY)

Rev. Dr. Santanu Kumar Patro
Registrar, Senate of Serampore College

PART I

Respected Master of the Serampore College, Rt. Rev. Dr. John S Sadananda; respected President of the Senate of Serampore College, Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos; Convenor of the Senate and Principal of Serampore College Dr. Vansanglura; recipients of Honorary Doctor of Divinity, the Principals of the affiliated Colleges, Heads of Institutions, members of the Board and Senate, representatives of the Council of Serampore College, guests, invitees, faculty and student representatives, and ladies and gentlemen. Indeed it is my privilege and honour to place before this august house the report of the Registrar.

I. Introduction:

1. **Significance of History for Today**

1517 to 2017, 500 years of remarkable faith journey. 500 years of Reformation and 500 years of Protestant Church. 500 years of God's abundance grace, forgiveness and liberation. We are freed and born anew in Christ. While the call is to "healing of memories" of past divisions; there is also need to pray for forgiveness for divisions perpetuated by Christians in the name of creed, race, caste and gender.

Reformation is not merely limited to one time historical event of 1517. 300 years later there was a greater and far wider reformation that transcended religions and society. William Carey and Serampore Mission were in the forefront of reformation. Not many realize his contributions to this part of the world. The birth of Serampore College in 1818 is a symbol and testimony of reformation through education. We are in 2017, five hundred years after reformation and 200 years after Serampore Mission.

Looking back to the history of 2000 years, one may say, that the 'Word became incarnational' in Christ; the 'Word became universal' through Reformation; and the 'Word became translational' through Serampore Mission. Today we are here to witness and celebrate "Incarnational, Universal, Translational" acts of God in history.

2. **Significance of Theological Education for Today**

Theological education journeyed through the centuries. From the translation of the scriptures to the establishment of Serampore College to teach 'piety' and 'Christian faith' and train 'priests' for Indian churches. Serampore College was instrumental in bringing social reformation. Serampore Mission impacted many to bring about religious, social and cultural transformation to the land of India. The contemporaries such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Hariharananda Vidyavagish and William Carey wrote a book titled '*Mahanirvana Tantra*' (The Great Liberation) in 1797. Raja Ram Mohan Roy learnt English under William Carey, and William Carey learnt Sanskrit under the feet of Hariharananda Vidyavagish. It was Vidyavagish who introduced Roy to Carey. Later three great reformed movements were born in the 19th Century - Brahma Samaj (1857), Arya Samaj (1875) and the Theosophical Society (1875). They all crusaded against Sati, Polygamy and Child Marriage. Roy was attributed to be the 'Maker of Modern India' and Carey was attributed to be the 'Father of Modern (Christian) Mission'.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. John Sadananda, the Master of Serampore College was one of the keynote speakers in Halle, Germany on the theme "Reformation, Education, Transformation" at the R-E-T International Twin Consultation 2015/2016. He spoke on the topic "Reformation and Education Today: Challenges,

Potentials and Learning Experiences for Education in a Context of Religious Diversity and Growing Extremism in India". He remembered the past with gratitude and reminded all of us who had gathered with a task. He said,

"The contribution of missionaries in the formation of the Church in different parts of India with a deep sense of its spiritual and social obligation and their vision for theological education within the larger context of the dynamics of India's religious and cultural pluralism is a rich legacy. The Reformers of the 16th century who were instrumental and the inspiration for the future Christian Missions were unanimous that God's mission in the world is entrusted to God's people. They challenge us to rediscover the meanings of the Gospel even today, and we are thankful to them. While we celebrate the bequeathed legacy of the Reformers and the Christian missionaries we revere them for their pioneering services. Inspired as such by the Gospel's core values of liberty, justice and truth, we admit that we have not been very successful in communicating the Gospel effectively in the modern times. We have the responsibility of letting it come alive into the living academic and spiritual traditions in our time and context when the ongoing reformation of the Church and society is called for. Churches in India have inherited this missionary heritage in the field of education. It is imperative to explore the contemporary significance of the Reformation to the ongoing mission and ministry of the Churches particularly in the field of education. We need to recapture the vision and mission of the Reformers and discover new paradigms for the vocation of the Church today."

All these events are important and they remind us our roots, legacy and leaders. While it is appropriate to remember and honour the forefathers and foremothers who led various reformation movements down through the history, there is a need to revisit and reinterpret reformation for our times and in our context. Incarnation, universality and translations are key to understanding the God's act in the history of humanity. In that, reformations and movements are not one time events of history. In celebrating the events of history, we critique our own participation and engagements. We are called to introspect and look into our own role in shaping our history, our future and our destiny. How we will shape today's world is more important than celebrating history for the sake of celebration.

3. The Contour of our History

- a. **Challenges to Plurality:** Things are changing fast, and the rise of exclusivism is dividing our society. Promoting an inclusive society is the need of the hour. The Government of the day should be reminded that promoting and strengthening inclusive society alone will make India one nation. Mere rhetoric of patriotism and sloganeering of nationalism have only generated more fear and distrust among the minorities, women, Dalits, Adivasis and Tribal. India at the core remains a secular and pluralistic state. The churches must work with religious groups, particularly with the marginalized communities to strengthen secularism and promote justice, peace, fraternity and freedom. Indian democracy and democratic institutions need to mature in pluralism.
- b. **Discrimination against Women:** We are bombarded with the news of rape, sexual harassment and sexist comments in the media. The viewers are so accustomed to such news of brutalities against women, it no longer disturbs our conscience. No laws, nor any strictures by the highest court prevent the perpetrators to refrain from such activities. Even the political class has lost the sense of being sensitive towards women. The sexist language is not seen as offence by some of our political leaders.
- c. **Demonetisation and Economic Marginalisation:** While the nation initially welcomed the stated objectives of demonetisation, the implementation has affected the poor very much. There is a growing suspicion about the efficacy of such a move. The eradication of black money through demonetisation did not appear to have had the desired

results. Digital transaction and promotion of cashless society remain a distant dream in the absence of proper infrastructure, illiteracy and poverty.

4. **The Call for the Church**

The church must rise and play a very constructive role. It must be the voice for the minorities, Dalits, Adivasi, Tribal, Women and other marginalized communities, especially at a time when these communities are going through the social discrimination and economic exploitation. The church must rise above all parochialism, and come to a realisation that Dalits and women are also body of Christ.

5. **The Call for the Theological Educators:**

Somewhere down the line the theological thinking and theological discourses are getting choked and voices have not been heard loud and clear. May be each of us are conscious of our personal image and scholarship and are comfortable with our academic achievements. We are called to be prophetic in our teachings and writings. We are caught up with our 'mundane' duties and we have not been able to offer anything new. Our theological discourses have often not found relevance to emerging issues that humanity is facing today. 'Nationalism and nationalistic' worldviews are now occupying centre-stage in all discourses. Whether it is Indian Nationalism or 'Only America' or Brexit, they all revolve around narrow and parochial notions of nation-state which defeats the very goal of plurality of religion, diversity of culture and minorities.

The academia is to be blamed equally. Intolerance by the so-called masters of universities and institutions has given rise to suppression of voices of independent and free thinkers. The academia is forced to fall in line of the masters. We need to critique our own institutions - whether our thinking is also suppressed because they are different than that of institutional thinking. Our writings have become overtly detached from context. At times our writings are only quantification of theological jargons that do not strike chord with the societal challenges. Over the years, we have not seen any new/ radical social and religious positioning in our thinking and writing. Caste analysis, issues of women, Dalit and Adivasi theologies need new hermeneutical orientations rather than relying heavily on borrowed Western constructs.

For example, cruelty against animal has no justification of culture, as much as animal sacrifices have no justification of spirituality. Sexual harassment and rape should not be undermined by ridiculing women's appearance and curtailing their freedom. Dalit, Tribal and Adivasis should not be deprived of their reservation in employment and educational institutions under the garb of new and 'talent' India. The proponent of new India, while seeing reservation as an obstacle to equal opportunity in employment and education, ignore core issues of discrimination and exploitation based on caste hierarchy.

It is an irony that while the churches are enthusiastic to fill the faculty positions 'only' by ordained ministers and/ or 'only' denominational candidates; many are denied ordination by scriptural misrepresentation and overtly guarded traditions. This defeats ecumenism and promotes gender and caste discriminations and prevents 'talents' in our campuses.

PART II

II. Results and Registration

Below is the table that shows the total number of graduates this year and new registration in the academic year 2016 into various programmes.

Total Number of Graduates in 2016		Total Number of New Registration in 2016	
D.Th	12	D.Th	32
D.Min	10	D.Min	24
M.Th	158	M.Th	189

MCS	04	MCS	57
MCP	12	MCP	09
B.D	1077	B.D	1188
B.C.S	92	B.C.S	389
B.Th	50	B.Th	58
B.Miss	20	B.Miss	24
D.C.P.C	28	D.C.P.C	31
Dip.C.S	126	Dip.C.S	197
Dip.B.T.	10	Dip.B.T.	44
DWM	14	DWM	45
Total:	1613	Total:	2237

III. Statistics of our Graduates

As per the record available from 1914 to 2016, 37197 students graduated and received different degrees and diplomas in last 102 years. The Senate Office has updated the list as per the records available. The names of the candidates and degrees they have received have been arranged according to the year and college and they are posted on the senate website: www.senateofseramporecollege.edu.in I would appeal to the Colleges to kindly circulate this information to the churches and post bulletins so that we may be able to update the graduates' contact details. The children and grandchildren of Serampore graduates are requested to give the status of their parents and grandparents who have studied in a college affiliated to the Senate of Serampore College. It is a proud moment for us that Serampore have been instrumental in training such number of ministers for God's ministry. Truly, Serampore is a brand name and we are all proud of being 'Seramporian'. Our motto is:

"Expect Great Things from God. Attempt Great Things for God."

Graduates from 1914-2016 in different courses

COURSE	YEAR	TOTAL NO. OF GRADUATES
D.TH.	1972-2016	247
D.MIN.	2005-2016	86
M.MIN	1991-1992	2
M.TH.	1960-2016	2656
M.R.S.	1965-1982	10
M.C.S.	2014-2016	6
B.D.	1914-2016	19615
L.TH.	1928-1976	1527
B.TH.	1972-2016	10685
B.R.E.	1966-1986	22
B.C.S.	1994-2016	1159
DIP.R.K.	1960-1986	14
D.C.P.C.	2002-2016	339
DIP.C.S	1993-2016	722
DIP.W&M.	2014-2016	28
DIP.B.T.	2013-2016	21
M.C.P.	2016	12
B.MISS.	2014-2016	46
Total Number of Graduates		37197

IV. The Programmes and Projects:

1. A Summary Report of the Commission for Programme Review

A Commission consisting of Rev. Dr. H. S. Wilson, Rev. Dr. H. Vanlalauva and Rev. Dr. Cherian Thomas and the Registrar, Convenor and member Secretary was appointed to review the programmes of SCEPTRE, SATHRI and BTESSC and propose programmes for effective coordination and

implementation. Rev. Dr. Mohan Larbeer and Rev. Dr. P. G. George were the invitees. The Commission visited SATHRI at Serampore, SCEPTRE in Kolkata and BTESSC in Bangalore from June 27 to July 1, 2016. Based on the recommendations of the Commission, the Executive Committee has taken following decisions:

- i. There is a need of proper coordination between all the units of the Senate to make the Senate programmes more effective and theological education more relevant.
- ii. The BTESSC objective is to build a liaison between Indian church and the Senate of Serampore College. There are many initiatives that are proposed and they have to be implemented with vigor in order to make theological education part of the church's priorities.
- iii. SCEPTRE should register more students for external programmes so that the churches may be made aware of the importance of theological education and teach the church on emerging theological issues. The syllabi and curriculum needs to be revised adequately to cater to the needs of the churches and society. Online programme and online study materials may be introduced. We need to target countries of South Asia and Gulf region where many of the Indian migrants have shown interest in doing theological education by extension.
- iv. The Executive Committee has decided to have certain administrative changes. There shall be a Dean for SCEPTRE. Under the Dean, there will be House Manager cum Administrative Assistant. The House Manager cum Administrative Assistant will be in charge of the entire Guest House. In future, there will be Coordinators, one for the South Region and Sri Lanka and another for the Northeast Region, including Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan. Kolkata will promote the extension programmes in the Northern region and Bangladesh. The D.Min programme henceforth shall be administered by SATHRI as a non-formal research programme.
- v. SATHRI is expected to have the building ready and put to use from June 2017. The building was made complete with the able leadership of Rev. Dr. P G George. Mr. Anil Thomas helped us in redrawing the interior building plan and making new estimation that was feasible without compromising the quality of work. Thankfully there was no escalation in the original cost even if the project was delayed. Stewardship and supervisions are key to completing the building. We thank all the donors who have contributed to this project.
- vi. Now SATHRI has a space of its own in Serampore College, the D. Th and D. Min programmes shall be run directly under SATHRI and in addition SATHRI shall take initiative to appoint National Professors and create endowments. There is a need of SATHRI to raise more scholarships for doctoral programme. Many deserving students are deprived of opportunities for want of resources available. In spite of a great number of students doing their doctoral programmes, there is still dearth of qualified theological educators, particularly in many of the branches, such as Homiletics, Christian Education, Worship and Liturgy, Christian Ethics, Social Analysis, Communications, Women Studies, Religions, Missiology.
- vii. The Board office will continue to function from Bangalore. It would continue to engage in grassroot teaching at the local congregation level. It is important that there is a coordination between the Church and Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC). All efforts are made to strengthen the relationship between church and theological education. We plan to have permanent office in Bangalore and we are looking for resources to establish a centre that would help us imparting contextual theological education and reach out to the churches.

2. Central Evaluation System

Sir, in the last Senate meeting the house gave us the mandate to introduce the Central Evaluation System and the Senate Office was able to implement within three months. Though the system had few limitations,

the entire process went on as planned. There were four centres where the CES was organised. I am thankful to Mar Thomas Theological College, Kottayam; Andhra Christian Theological College, Hyderabad; Eastern Theological College, Jorhat and Serampore College, Serampore for holding the CES and providing facilities at a very low price. Nearly 220 teachers participated and in an average, they evaluated 70 papers per day. An analytical study of the efficacy of the Central Evaluation System was done and 15 Colleges were taken as sample keeping in mind the regions, colleges of different categories, vernacular and English medium. The marks under the previous system and the CES had a difference of less than 4%. Under the CES students got 4% less than the marks they used to obtain under the previous system. There were some recommendations from Colleges - one that no teachers be allowed to evaluate more than 60 answer script per day. Senior teachers may also be encouraged to participate in the future. In future, care should be taken to see the subject teachers only evaluate the answer scripts. For example, communication papers were evaluated in some instances by the Christian ministry professor and Christian Education papers were evaluated by Christian Counselling. However, at BD level, the subjects are divided under branches and branches are clubbed together under a cluster. The idea behind having cluster is to encourage teachers to approach the branches within the cluster from an interdisciplinary perspective. Therefore, I am confident a teacher belonging to the same cluster may be in a position to evaluate papers of branches belonging to his/ her cluster.

This year we plan to have some changes in the CES. In each zone the entire cluster paper shall be evaluated. For example, in one zone biblical cluster, in other zones theology cluster, History and Mission cluster and Christian Ministry and Religions clusters respectively. The first five days shall have evaluation, and sixth day shall have Board of Studies meetings. Teachers who would join the CES shall be paid travel and those who would only come for Board of Studies meeting shall have to meet their travel. During the Board of Studies meetings, the question paper setting shall be taken up as seminar discussion and model question papers shall be prepared for each course and that shall be used as model question paper for next three to five years. Similarly, the Board of Studies meeting shall be made an annual feature in the calendar and more than 240 teachers shall be able to participate each year. This is an opportunity for the teachers to come together to have dialogue on common academic concerns and have fellowship. I appeal the Principals to encourage teachers to participate in Central Evaluation System.

3. India Theological Resource Book

The project has been moving as per the plan. From 5th to 8th July 2016 the writers came with their final draft and discussed with the other writers together for the book assigned, and finalized their draft. Then it was revised and submitted. There are 5 manuscripts which are ready to be sent for English editing and then printing. By June 2017 we plan to bring out the first set of publications. The project is running 4 months behind the schedule. Simultaneously the preparation for another writers' consultation shall be organised in July, 2017. A set of 10 resource books shall be taken up for writing. If we get cooperation to maintain the time schedule it is possible to complete the project as planned. However, I am thankful to the writers for their hard work. This will go a long way in printing theological resource books in the country and also promote vernacular theological textbooks.

In February 2017, the Board of the Theological Textbook Programme of the South Asia (BTTBPSA) will be meeting to discuss the new project of vernacular theological resource book. The books of ITRB that are to be published may also be translated and published in vernacular language. BTTBPSA should seriously plan in identifying translators. We need a print-on-demand machine for publishing vernacular theological resource books and distribute at an affordable rate.

4. M.Th Curriculum and Syllabi Revision

The Senate was able to complete the Curriculum and Syllabi Revision for M.Th Programmes. The Process started in December, 2014 and was completed by March 2016. There were two major consultations in which more than 60 professors gathered from all M.Th Colleges and prepared the regulations, structures and syllabi. While the basic thrust of M.Th programme remains to train candidates and equip the theological institutions with adequate number of teaching staff; M.Th also now become a degree for the

churches to carry out their own teaching programmes, particularly among the lay leaders as well as facilitating in-service ministerial training for pastors. Quite a number of students go for higher study after their M.Th. Currently there are 12 centres and around 18 branches that are offered in various centres. The new syllabi have many new aspects, including a course on Teaching Pedagogy. Under the new revised system the credit hours are increased from 40 to 50 credit hours. Many other new subjects are introduced in each of the branches. The new curriculum came into effect from June 2016 after duly approved by the Senate of Serampore College.

V. Policy Matters:

1. Service Rule, Promotion, Salary Structure and Number of Teachers and Teaching Load

May I remind the house the proposal that was submitted in 2016 to the Senate. There were four policy documents - Service Rule, Rules for Promotion, Salary Structure and Teaching Load - all need to be considered if we are serious to provide quality education and bring in discipline in academic administration. Taking the mandate of the house the same was taken up by the management of our affiliated colleges. Few sent their responses and others have responded saying that they have adopted the above policies with suitable modifications. While Service Rule is a must for all faculty, it is important to incorporate the important clauses of the Service Rule such as sabbatical, study, leave, appointment, leave policies. There are other policy documents which prescribes minimum salary for the faculty, number of teaching staff required for each programme and promotions.

A minimum salary structure was proposed and I am glad that many of the Colleges have better salary structures than what is prescribed. I would appeal to all the College managements to pay a minimum salary as prescribed by the Senate with other benefits, such as Provident Fund, Gratuity and/ or Pension and other annual emoluments.

With regards to promotion, the proposal is to simplify further. For example, all Colleges should have three categories of teaching staff, namely, the Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor. Promotion to next category should be affected between 5 to 8 years, depending on qualification, academic work and teaching and ministerial experience. Promotion policy should be implemented uniformly across the board, so when a teacher moves from one Institution to another, within the Senate fraternity, the years of service experience and all promotions may be protected.

2. MOU for the Colleges and issuance of Affiliation Certificates

The affiliated Colleges belong to various denominations and traditions, and have different administrative structures. There is a need of common minimum administrative structure that would help protecting and strengthening academic standard and quality as well as outline ministry orientation for India.

MOU is needed between the affiliated Colleges and the Senate in order to enter into bilateral partnership in carrying out each other's duties and responsibilities. The draft MOU has been prepared by the Executive Committee and the same shall be distributed to the Colleges. It will remain a legal document as required by the Law for protecting the interests of both. Certain clauses of the MOU may be suitably modified according to the need through bilateral discussion. What I would underline is that all Colleges need to sign the MoU for effective functioning.

Many a time Colleges want Affiliation Certificate. The Affiliation Certificate has been prepared and each College shall be issued affiliation certificate after the memorandum of understanding is signed. The Colleges which are under the category of 'Provisional Affiliation', shall be issued provisional affiliation certificate for a period of three years. Similarly, all examination centres shall be issued 'Approved Examination Centre' Certificate.

Institutions which are approved to be examination centres for conducting external examinations are

not to write either in their letterheads nor on official billboards 'affiliated to the Senate of Serampore College.' Rather, such centres may write 'An Approved Examination Centre' of the Senate of Serampore College.

3. Senate of Serampore College (University) Publications

The Executive Committee has decided to have all publications under one banner and it will be henceforth published as the Senate of Serampore College (University) Publications. The units such as Senate, SATHRI, BTESSC and SCEPTRE may use their name as facilitator. The ISBN and ISSN numbers shall be acquired for all publications. The right to market shall be retained with the individual units.

4. India Theological Book Club

In my last report, Sir, I had presented a programme to promote India Theological Resource Books (ITRB) at the BD level. Accordingly, 10 books are nearing completion. Another 10 books shall be getting ready to be written in this calendar year. The books that are completed will soon be sent for editing and later publication. The Indian Theological Book Club shall be open to all registered students and faculty of the all affiliated Colleges of the Senate of Serampore College. The students and teachers shall pay a membership fee of Rs.4500/- and they shall receive in return 30 resource books that are prepared as per the BD Syllabi. Membership shall be open from June 2017 and students and teachers may pay by a maximum of three instalments in two years. Others, such as pastors, lay leaders and seminary students may join the membership with onetime payment of Rs.5500/-. They shall receive the same number of books as others. After the distribution of 30 books, the membership shall be valid to get books at a discounted rate of 35% for registered students and 25% for others. The Senate proposes to have a separate department for printing, publication and distribution in future.

5. Revisiting Equivalence Policy:

Many of the Universities in India now offer doctoral programmes in Christian Studies. At least one University in India offers Theology in its campus. There are many Catholic seminaries that also offer Doctoral programmes. While there is a need for dialogue to understand each other's programme, our approach to recognising degrees has always been on quality of education imparted at the highest level. Most of the Universities and Institutions offer non-residential or short duration residential programme, unlike the Senate's requirement of three full year residency for doctoral programme and two years for Master Programme. While we maintain our distinctiveness in higher education, it is policy to identify individual scholars who may have come from such streams that may not meet our residency requirements and quality. Criteria to identify scholarship individually is available under the Senate system. Such candidates are assessed on their prior qualifications, institutions from where they have passed out, course work, grades and the research work. The doctoral thesis may have to be also sent for an assessment to ascertain whether the thesis meets our expectations.

A policy may be in place for all candidates who would like their doctoral degrees to be recognised as equivalent. The Recognition and Equivalence Committee should come with a concrete proposal, which is practical and not prejudices, and not running the risk of compromising our own standard.

VI. Proposed Programmes and Projects:

1. William Carey Chair of World Christianity

Soon we are going to celebrate the 200 years of Serampore College and 100 years of the Senate. The Senate has proposed to institute a William Carey Chair of World Christianity - a prestigious chair that would promote scholarship, attract academicians for research and engage in historiography. It will be a great moment for each of its alumni to be part of this project. Since 1914 there are thousands of students passed out from this prestigious and oldest university of India. The Senate appeals to each of the alumnus to contribute Rs.500/- or more to build an endowment in honour of Rev. Dr. William Carey. This will be our way of paying tribute to Rev. Dr. William Carey. We want to see this Chair is inaugurated in 2018. The children and grandchildren of alumni may also come forward to contribute in honour of their parents and grandparents who were formerly the students of this great university.

Please visit our website www.senateofseramporecollege.edu.in and see whether the names of all the graduates are listed. If anyone is missing, kindly furnish a detailed information for listing. We shall be sending circulars, advertise in journals and church magazines and publish on notice boards. We will soon give the details as to how you can contribute to this project.

2. K C Abraham Centre for Contextual Theology

Rev. Dr. K. C. Abraham, who passed away on 12th June 2016 has left a great legacy by his contribution as the Secretary and the first Director of SATHRI. He impacted through his scholarship and mentoring students. He influenced many of his followers in contextual theologies. He was the pioneer in bringing liberation theology to India. His family wants to contribute a piece of land in Bangalore to be used as a Centre that would promote contextual theology. The Senate proposes to build a permanent Board Office (BTESSC) to continue our programmes and have a study centre. We are thankful to Dr. Molly Abraham and her children Liza and Ajit. The whole conversation is at its initial stage and the details of the project shall be worked out soon.

3. Post Graduate Diploma in Contextual Theology

Much have been articulated, spoken and discussed about contextual theologies and the students have been grounded in contextual theological thinking. But there is a gap between contextual theological thinking and its implementation at the church level. A need is felt to start a diploma programme for the leaders and the ministers of the church to teach on Dalit, Adivasi, Feminist, Tribal, Eco, Disable theologies and issues of Justice, Peace, Human freedom etc. It may be necessary to reach the church lay leaders and ministers with this programme and teach the whole church. In-service training and continuing education are necessary for all lay leaders and ministers. This programme may be offered by SCEPTRE in coordination with the BTESSC.

4. M.Th, D. Min and D. Th for South Asia

A proposal is in place to offer M.Th, D. Min and D.Th programmes for our South Asian brothers and sisters. This is a long-standing need of the churches of South Asia. Often there is a discussion whether we are mandated to venture into South Asia. The Senate has to take its obligation seriously. The Executive Committee has discussed the proposal and thinks we will be in a position to work through the instruments of SATHRI to plan such a programme. Unless we offer, there will be great scarcity of teaching staff and theological educators in the church. Secondly, due to our commonalities in terms of culture, geo-political and religious situation we are in a better position to train our neighbouring churches' candidates. It is proposed that M.Th and D.Th shall be offered with minimum residency requirements and longer year of duration respectively and exclusively for South Asia. This programme shall not be offered for Indians. The details shall be worked out and if successful we may also invite candidates from other countries.

5. Church and Senate Coordination Committee

The Senate is committed to the theological education and training ministers of the church and strengthening relationships with the churches. After all, our constituencies are the part of the churches and we primarily work with the churches. Theological education is about the church and for the church. The Senate is only a catalyst. It designs curriculum and prepares syllabi keeping the needs of the churches. We the teaching community belong to the church, and are strongly grounded in the churches both in spiritual and ministerial formations. Therefore, the entire theological fraternity is deeply engaged in the ministries and mission of the church in some way or the other. As a theological community representing the churches of India we feel necessary to critique the church as an insider.

There is a need to create a space to listen to each other. The Ecumenical Relation and Church Ministries is one such Committee headed by the Secretary of the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College. I propose that this body be made more active, and leaders of the churches may be invited to meet more frequently to discuss how theological education may be made more engaging in the context of the church. I appeal to church leaders to make use of us and call us to

participate in the theological education programme of the church. We are available to listen to you. I appeal to the church leaders to give your inputs when we design programmes and prepare curriculum. We need mutual participation and common platform to discuss matters related to theological education.

6. The Senate of Serampore College as a University

There is no doubt that Senate practically functions as a university. Serampore College has been given the charter and Act which empowers the Council of Serampore College to offer theological programmes and confer theological degrees. We have been carrying out this mandate for nearly 100 years. Today in India all churches are part of the Serampore fraternity - the Orthodox, Reformed, Ecumenical, Evangelical, Free Tradition, Pentecostal and Charismatic. We have urgency and we have vision. The senate needs to expand and move beyond the boundaries. Senate trains ministers for varied ministries of the church in India and Indian society by being committed to Ecumenism and Contextual theology.

We need bigger programmes and structure that would continue to give leadership in the national and international level, and create stature and standing that will match world class universities in the field of theological education. Let us work to make it a world class theological university with bigger campus and academic departments. We need an extended campus in Serampore.

Concluding Remarks

Finally, I need your prayers and support. We are going to be a totally new team and there will be new committees. It is a big challenge. I took up the responsibility in April 2013 with a sense of fear and nervousness, someone who had never shared in the leadership of the Senate before. I am thankful to God for his strength and grace. I am sure with your cooperation and blessings of the leaders we will be able to carry out the responsibilities that are entrusted to us.

At the outset let me thank God, the almighty for the health, strength and wellbeing granted to each of us. I thank the Rt. Rev. Dr. John S Sadananda, the Master of Serampore College for his continued guidance and advice. I thank the Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos, the President of the Senate of Serampore College for his leadership. I thank Rev. Dr. Mohan Larbeer, the Secretary of the BTESSC, Rev. Dr. P. G. George, the Dean of Research/ SATHRI and Rev. Dr. M. T. Cherian, Asso. Dean of SCEPTRE and my colleagues in the offices of the BTESSC, SCEPTRE, SATHRI and Senate. You all make possible year after year to gather and discuss our visions and our challenges. Thank you for your cooperation and team work.

February 2, 2017