

**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:  
URGENCIES AND PRIORITIES**  
**Senate of Serampore College: Exercise in B.D. Curriculum Revision, 2006-2009**  
A South Asian Theological Education Endeavor

**Serampore College and Its B.D. Curriculum- A Historical Note<sup>1</sup>**

*Mission Heritage during the Colonial Period*

Serampore College was founded by William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward in 1818, at Serampore, or Fredericknagore, then a Danish Settlement in the Bengal region of India. In 1827 the college was incorporated by a Royal Charter by King Frederick VI of Denmark with university rights and immunities and the power to confer degrees. In 1845, on the transfer of the Settlement of Serampore from Denmark to Great Britain, provision was made by the British Government in the Treaty of Purchase for the continuance of the chartered rights, immunities and power of the College. In 1910 and the subsequent two to three years, a re-organization of the College was effected. Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) and Licentiate in Theology (L. Th.) were the basic theological education programs of the Serampore system from the beginning of its re-organization in 1910. The B.D. Degree was considered as the highest theological degree molded on the pattern of London and Oxford Universities where they were considered to be a research degree.<sup>2</sup> In 1915 the Convocation of Serampore College was held and the degree of Bachelor of Divinity was conferred for the first time under the Charter of Incorporation of the College.

In 1918 the Bengal Act No. IV of 1918, called the Serampore College Act, was passed by the Bengal Legislative Council. On the basis of this Act, the Council of Serampore College was enlarged and the Senate of Serampore College was constituted having representatives from various Christian communities in India, its members being appointed by the Council. In 1919 when the Senate first met to organize the curriculum of L. Th., it stipulated the following core subjects: Biblical Studies, New Testament Greek, English Language and Literature, Logic, Natural Science, an Indian Vernacular, and Psychology. The B.D. Curriculum covered the following subjects: Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Theology, History of Religion, Church History, Philosophy of Religion, Moral Philosophy, a Classical Language, Liturgiology, Pastoralia, Vernacular language and English Essays.<sup>3</sup>

After 20 years, the Senate appointed a Curriculum Study Committee in 1939. At its session in 1940, the Senate clarified the purpose of the B.D. program, stating that it “connotes a general training in theology, both intellectual and practical, undergone by students who have previously taken a university course in Arts or Science, or who have successfully prosecuted a course of preliminary studies regarded by the Senate as equivalent to a university degree in Arts or Science.”<sup>4</sup> Some principles of the curriculum were also evolved:

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<sup>1</sup> The texts in this section are largely extracted from the official Regulations Booklets of the Senate of Serampore College. For example, Regulations Relating to the Degree of Master of Theology (M.Th.), Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2007 revised reprint of 1998 edition, pp.1-2. The texts are almost the same in all the regulation booklets.

<sup>2</sup> Ravi Tiwari, “Initiating Revision of Curricula”, Exercise in Curriculum Revision 2006-2009, Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2009, p.2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

1. The subjects in the curriculum for the B.D. degree shall be divided into three groups: A (Compulsory units), B (Optional units), and C (Ministry oriented units);
2. A certain standard of proficiency shall be required from all candidates in the following five branches: Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Theology, History of Religion and Church History;
3. Every branch in the curriculum was classified under major and minor categories on the basis of the number of years a subject was studied. A subject studied for three years was counted as 3 units, two years as 2 units, and one year as 1 unit.
  - a. The total number of units required for the B.D. degree was nineteen; twenty-one was maximum;
  - b. The total number of units that were assigned to the compulsory subjects were: OT (3), NT (3), CT (2), HR (1) and CH (1);
  - c. Remaining nine, ten or eleven were selected from two optional groups. These optional groups had, in addition to the major ones, such subjects as Moral Philosophy, Classical language, Vernacular Studies, Psychology of Religion, Pastoralia, Liturgiology, Religious Education, Rural Church, and Indian Culture.

Within this structure, the curriculum for the degree had the following Preliminary Foundational Courses: Old Testament, New Testament, English – Text and Composition, Vernacular – Text and Composition, Psychology; Outline of World History, or NT Greek, or one Classical language other than Greek, or Elements of Science.

The Advanced Courses were: Old Testament (without Hebrew – 3 units; with Hebrew – 5 units); New Testament with or without Greek; History of Religion; Church History; Philosophy of Religion, Moral Philosophy, Classical Languages and Liturgiology; Pastoralia, Religious Education, Psychology of Education, Rural Church and Indian Culture; Vernacular Studies; English and Vernacular Essays (later developed into thesis, project and translations).<sup>5</sup>

*The Heritage Maintained in General in Twentieth Century Independent India*

In 1949 the location of the Council of Serampore College was transferred from London to Serampore. In the same year the program of the Degree of Master of Theology was instituted. In 1962, the Senate introduced two more degree programs: Bachelor of Religious Education (B.R.E.) and Master of Religious Studies (M.R.S.). At the 1969 Senate meeting, it was resolved to upgrade the L. Th. Diploma program to a four year Bachelor of Theology (B. Th.) Degree Course. In 1983 it was made a three-year program. In 1985 the Senate introduced a program of continuing theological education for pastors and Christian workers leading to the Degree of Master of Ministry (M. Min.). In 1989 the Diploma in Christian Studies (Dip. C. S.) was introduced for the benefit of people of all faiths. In 1989 the Degree of Bachelor of Christian Studies (B.C.S.) was introduced to provide laity with an in-depth understanding of Christian faith and deepen their commitment to service in the context of their vocations. At the same time the B.D. external studies program was discontinued. In 1997, the Senate

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

introduced the Degree of Doctor of Ministry (D. Min.) as a professional doctoral degree for pastors and others engaged in Christian Ministry.<sup>6</sup>

Introduction of higher theological degree programs broke the reputation and halo that was created around the B.D. Degree.<sup>7</sup> It was unfortunate that the 1930 Senate decision to make L. Th. and B.D. independent of each other was done away with. Particularly when L.Th. was phased out and the B. Th. Program was introduced, it created much confusion since two degrees at bachelor level were introduced without much clarity in defining their relationship with one another. It is for this reason that some exemptions were introduced for B. Th. graduates pursuing B.D. or B.C.S. programs, in terms of years of study and number of papers to be done. Moreover a residential program (B. Th.) was linked with an extension program (B.C.S.). Besides, the structure and content of the B.D. and B.C.S. programs were basically the same. A further confusion was created when the B.C.S. graduates (mainly laity who had done extension studies) were allowed to study the M. Th. (residential program for B.D. graduates) and D. Min. (program for pastors and others in full-time Christian ministry).<sup>8</sup>

The Registrar of the Senate observes that the principle, content and nature of the B.D. curriculum as adopted in 1940 remained the same for the Serampore system for many decades. With the increasing demand for introducing new fields, new subjects and branches were added from time to time at the expense of the foundational and advanced courses, thereby reducing the depth of study on the one hand and over-burdening the student on the other. The 1991 revision divided the B.D. curriculum into three sections – compulsory (foundational), optional and inter-disciplinary courses. It required 26 papers and a thesis (or 2 papers in lieu of thesis) for the completion of the B.D. Degree. Branch-wise the subjects were divided as follows: Old Testament-3; New Testament-3; Theology and Ethics-4; History of Christianity-3; Religion and Society-3; Christian Ministry-3; Communication-1; Social Analysis-1; Inter-Disciplinary-3; Optionals-2 for thesis writers and 4 for others. Of these, twelve papers were examined by the Senate while fourteen papers (plus thesis/ two courses) were examined by the college. Prior to doing the required credited B.D. papers, candidates have been expected to study some methodological and foundational introductory courses including passing the elementary examination in one of the biblical languages, under the category of non-credited essential papers. So also, Practical Work/Exposure has been intended to be an integral non-credited requirement of the total teaching and training program.<sup>9</sup>

The 1991 B.D. Regulations maintained that the B.D. Degree course is “designed to equip persons for essential functions and ministries of the Church in India who could commend their faith with relevance in the context of a pluralistic world. It aims at an integrative and interdisciplinary approach among the biblical, theological, historical and religious fields with involvement in practical aspects of life and ministry in the regional, social, and cultural aspects of the sub-continent. It also ensures adequate grounding in the discipline of linguistics for study of basic texts and provides hermeneutical tools and skills for understanding and

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<sup>6</sup> Regulations Relating to the Degree of Master of Theology (M.Th.), pp.1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Ravi Tiwari, “Theological Education in Context: Serampore Model”, Paper presented at the Consultation on Partnership among Churches and Seminaries at Shillong on August 3, 2009, pp.1-2.

<sup>8</sup> Ravi Tiwari, “Initiating Revision of Curricula”, p.3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* pp.4-5.

interpreting the context of ministry.”<sup>10</sup> While in general the curriculum still followed the earlier model, some of the papers did explicitly reflect concern for theological training within the contemporary context from a liberation perspective. For instance the study of the Pentateuch was entitled, “Witness of Israel to Liberation – A Study of the Pentateuch”, and the study of Old Testament prophetic literature was called, “Vision and Mission of the Prophets”. Then again papers on Dalit Theology, Tribal Theology, Theology of Human Development, Indian Christian Theologians, Christian Response to Other Faiths, History of Christianity among the Dalit and Tribal People of India, Communication for Social Change, Understanding Indian Society, etc. were introduced, though many of them were optional papers. So also among the Inter-Disciplinary papers, subjects such as “Women in Religion and Society”, “Creation, Ecology and Human Responsibility”, “Human Rights”, etc. were introduced.

### **The Urgency and Priorities of B.D. Curriculum Revision in the Twenty-First Century** *The Process*<sup>11</sup>

In 2002 the Committee on Academic Administration of the Senate noted that the process of revision of the B.D. curriculum needed to be started. However the process gathered momentum only in 2004 when a Concept Paper was circulated by the Registrar, and affiliated institutions and interested individuals were invited to respond to the same. The Senate then went on to organize three regional consultations in Delhi (September 4-5, 2006), Kolkata (September 7-8, 2006), and Kottayam (October 5-6, 2006) followed by a national consultation in Mumbai (October 24-25, 2006). Representatives of the Council and Senate of Serampore College along with representatives of its Board of Theological Education, members of the Boards of Studies, representatives of affiliated theological institutions (including administrators, faculty and students), leaders and representatives of churches, scholars from secular fields and special invitees participated in these consultations. The discussion was carried on in a special seminar on curriculum revision prior to the annual meetings of the Board and the Senate at Shillong in February 2007. A Core Committee was then formed to look into all aspects of the curriculum revision. This Core Committee worked on its own and subsequently with the Working Committee of the Academic Council (earlier known as Committee on Academic Administration) after which consultations were held with the members of the Boards of Studies in Bangalore (August 4-6, 2008) and Chennai (October 6-7, 2008). A new Core Group consisting of representatives from different branches of B.D. studies was constituted to carry the work forward. The new Core Group met in Chennai on January 15-16, 2009. The Working Committee of the Academic Council then appointed an Editorial Committee to give final shape to the new curriculum. The Senate in its meeting in Madurai during February 2009 resolved that the new curriculum be implemented from June 2010; those colleges who so desired could even start adopting the new curriculum from June 2009 for the first year and second year programs of the new curriculum. The Editorial Committee has been engaged in the process of giving final shape to the curriculum and will hopefully be able to complete its work by the end of August 2009.

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<sup>10</sup> Regulations Relating to the Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) Degree Course, Serampore: Senate of Serampore College 2005 reprint of 1993 edition, p.4.

<sup>11</sup>cf. “Decisions and Suggestions of Different Committees of the Senate”, Exercise in Curriculum Revision 2006-2009, Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2009, pp. 108-117.

### *The Urgent Need of Curriculum Revision*

Curriculum revision is necessary in view of the changed and changing contexts of the church and society at large. Several trends and forces are affecting the lives of the people such as globalization, propelled by its ideology of free market economy that is controlled by economically powerful, urbanization and its evils, the neglect of the agricultural sector, the growing gap between the poor and the middle and rich classes, lack of enthusiasm for multi-lateral ecumenism and the rise of denominational confessionalism, the politicization of religions and communalization of politics, nationalistic and militant ideologies, rigidifying of group identities, rising individualism, increasing alcoholism and drug addiction, concerns for the rights and dignity of the marginalized communities, movements for justice and peace, electronic media including worship services on cable TV and sensational tele-evangelistic programmes, on-line education and virtual classrooms, etc. Therefore a curriculum, which seeks to give direction and shape to academic, professional and individual/communitarian spiritual formation, with a view to facilitating renewal in the church and effecting transformation of society, needs to take these contextual challenges into account.<sup>12</sup>

Curriculum revision is also necessitated on account of the deficiencies, difficulties and ambiguities in the present curricula, especially when seen in the light of the present day needs, issues and challenges. The western theological education system arising from a monoglotic, cognitive, rational and denominational theological discourse has largely influenced theological education in India.<sup>13</sup> While we have certainly benefited from it, we need to realize that the present day Indian multi-religious, multi-cultural, and political socio-economic context is not the same as that of the west from whom we borrowed the system. Furthermore the weaknesses of the western system have surfaced in terms of its difficulties and failures in building up the Christian community and equipping it for an authentic life of witness in terms of witness, service and fellowship in the present day challenges of urbanization, industrialization, individualism, secularism and the de-sacralized perception of reality.<sup>14</sup>

A genuine desire and the concerted quest to be relevant to the context in India have resulted in the introduction of new departments and new courses within the Senate system as mentioned earlier. However such an arrangement has led to proliferation of courses and compartmentalization of disciplines (branches) resulting in the students being overloaded with more work, and theological colleges having the administrative burden of sustaining a large number of departments.<sup>15</sup> Besides as, noted earlier, there is considerable overlap between the course content of the B. Th. and B.D. programs, and also between the residential and external study programs. Candidates can even move from a residential program to an external study one and vice versa, when they engage in higher studies.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the evaluation

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<sup>12</sup> O.V. Jathanna, "The Rationale for the Curriculum Revision of the Senate of Serampore College", Paper presented at the National Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Mumbai, October 24-25, 2006, pp.305; O.V. Jathanna, "The Curriculum Revision: Findings on the Way", Exercise in Curriculum Revision 2006-2009, Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2009, p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> Ravi Tiwari, "Important Suggestions from Consultations", Exercise in Curriculum Revision 2006-2009, Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2009, p.56.

<sup>14</sup> O.V. Jathanna, "The Rationale for the Curriculum Revision of the Senate of Serampore College", pp. 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p.7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p.8.

system which is largely written-examination centered also has its limitations; moreover the nature of inter-disciplinary and integrated courses requires a different set of evaluation criteria. At the same time theological teachers need to enhance and update their pedagogical skills.<sup>17</sup>

### *Priorities in Curriculum Revision*

#### Objectives of the Curriculum Revision

Four oft-repeated adjectives qualify the objectives of the curriculum revision during the first decade of the twenty-first century: meaningful, relevant, manageable, effective. Curriculum revision is not an exercise in revision for revision sake. During the past 19 years the language of discourse and articulation has undergone change, the volume of publication of theological literature has expanded, and a cross century generation with its complex character of rational and post-modern tendencies requires a theological curriculum and an ecclesial life, faith and witness which are meaningful. Curriculum revision should not only make knowledgeable sense, but it should also go beyond campus musings and intellectual stimulation to address issues of the times, analyzing them, giving rise to mature perspectives in responding to them, and committing, equipping and empowering theological students and churches accordingly. In short, the new curriculum should ensure a wholesome balance of academic learning, ministerial orientation, missional commitment, ecumenical inclusiveness, practical training and individual and collective spiritual formation.

The endeavors, to make theological education up to date and relevant, require qualified teaching faculty, skilled administrative personnel, and adequate infrastructure. In other words, theological institutions should be capable enough to manage such ventures. Since the cost of living in general and the expenses involved in theological education in particular are steadily and at times rising steeply, the new curriculum should be financially viable. The new curriculum also have to be effective. It should facilitate purposeful and constructive changes in the life and work of the theological community and the church.<sup>18</sup>

#### The Issue of Methodology: The Text-Context Dialectic

For the larger part of the twentieth century, most theological institutions in India have been following the traditional methodological framework and principles of theological education. The emphasis has been on the priority of text over context. The words of the Bible, and the patriarchal socio-cultural structure of biblical times, have been considered to be primary. The heterogeneous contemporary contexts and their challenges have been regarded as being secondary and therefore subject to the dictates of the biblical texts and their contexts. A corollary to the phrase, “priority of text over context” is the authoritative primacy given to the denominational biblical hermeneutics and theological doctrines propounded by mission bodies as they set up their respective theological institutions in India. The fear of being branded as “heretic”, has made Indian Christians for long to conform themselves to the content and form of theological education as imparted by western missionaries, churches and

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<sup>17</sup> Roger Gaikwad et al, “Consultations on Curriculum Revision: Report”, Exercise in Curriculum Revision 2006-2009, Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2009, pp. 36,40,44.

<sup>18</sup> Roger Gaikwad, “Echoes of the 2006 Consultations”, ”, Exercise in Curriculum Revision 2006-2009, Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2009, p. 62.

universities. We have in general refrained from engaging in efforts to contextualize and indigenize theological education.

In opposition to the traditional practices of theologizing, during the 2006 consultations, a significant number of participants have advocated that contextual theological formation should be the framework of theological education. Within this framework, they have asserted that the experiences and struggles of the subaltern people groups such as the dalits,<sup>19</sup> the tribals/ adivasis,<sup>20</sup> women,<sup>21</sup> the poor and other marginalized sections of the society<sup>22</sup> should constitute the foundational basis of theological formation. However some of the participants in the consultations expressed their concern that the perspective of rooting theological education in the people's experiences and struggles is fraught with the danger of reductionism – reducing the gospel to a sociological expression – and the danger of theological exclusivism. While not denying the importance of addressing the context of economic poverty, social injustice, religious and cultural plurality, the suffering of the subalterns, etc., they emphasized that theological education should be rooted in Christian faith traditions<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> While the majority of the Christians in India are dalits, Busi Suneel Bhanu critically observes that “a majority of the Serampore affiliated institutions as well as their sponsoring churches are yet to recognize the voices of the marginalized, let alone incorporate and integrate them into ministerial formation as well as the work and witness of the church”. Busi Suneel Bhanu, “Revisioning of Curricula: the Place of Dalit Theology”. Paper presented at the Regional Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Kolkata, September 7-8, 2006, p.1.

<sup>20</sup> Tribals constitute another major segment of the Church in India, particularly in North East India. So far, the perspectives and practices of non-tribal Christians have pre-dominated theological education. The contexts, views and ways of life of the tribals need to be due space in the new curriculum. cf. Ezamo Murry, “A Brief Presentation on the Northeast Concerns”. Paper presented at the Regional Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Kolkata, September 7-8, 2006, p.3.

<sup>21</sup> Though the Senate of Serampore College has established Women's Studies as an independent branch in theological education at the post graduate level, women's concerns are not adequately integrated into the theological education program in terms of perspectival content, encouragement of women students, and recruitment of women as teachers in theological institutions. Churches likewise do not render theological, ecclesial justice to women. Limatula Longkumer, “Women and Women's Studies Concerns in Curriculum Revision of the Senate of Serampore College”. Paper presented at the Regional Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Kolkata, September 7-8, 2006, pp.1-2.

Ivy Singh calls for replacing “the pro-men theology with a theology of liberative praxis, and non-hierarchical, non-privatistic in its ecumenical vision. It moves from patriarchy to partnership which recognizes the full humanity of women together with men as people of God called to work for dignity and genuine community based on love, understanding and right relationships”. Ivy Singh, “Draft Paper” presented at the Regional Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Kolkata, September 7-8, 2006, p.2.

<sup>22</sup> T.K. John proposes, “The least, the last, the most deprived, the most de-priced and deformed, need to be the starting point of the focussed organized effort at knowing the Indian peoples. From the effect to the cause, from the particular to the universal, has to be the journey of the learner in the Kingdom of God in India. The dalits, the tribals, the women of these sectors, and then of the other sectors, the homeless and the landless, with the immensity of their problems and poignancies of the people forced to be in such situations, should ignite the theological *jijnasa* in the hearts of the students that knock at the portals of our centres”. T.K. John, “A Journey in Indian Christian Theological Method and Content”. Paper presented at the Regional Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Delhi, September 5-6, 2006, p.12.

Included among the marginalized sections of society are people living with HIV/AIDS, and human beings living with disabilities of various kinds whom the church and society are guilty of not providing just-care. cf. Wati Longchar, “The Need for Theological Education Transformation in India”. Draft Paper presented at the Regional Consultation at Kolkata, September 7-8, 2006, p.4.

<sup>23</sup> Roger Gaikwad, “Towards a Revised Curriculum: Proposals about Methodology and Content”, Exercise in Curriculum Revision 2006-2009, Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2009, p. 49.

In the context of the debate on the priority of text or context, other voices have called for an integrated approach. Theological education should be a bonding and blending together of the text and the context, a transformative interaction between guidance from the Word of God and the situational needs and challenges of the people. It is characterized by faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ along with committed responsibility to the church, academia and the world at large. In this process the text and the context have to mutually influence theological education and ministerial formation.<sup>24</sup> Thus a dialogical text-context dialectic would have to be cultivated. The relationship between text/theory and context/practice will always have to be a two-way traffic. Context and practice are informed by textual hermeneutics and theoretical commitments, while the understanding of the text and the articulation of theories are influenced and enriched by contextual, practical experiences.<sup>25</sup>

### The Structure of the New B.D. Curriculum

During the consultations on curriculum revision a range of suggestions was made. At one end was the view that the present branch-wise or disciplinary divisions be retained. There would thus be branches in Old Testament, New Testament, Theology and Ethics, History of Christianity, and so on. It was argued that such a structure with its emphasis on a thorough grounding in each discipline is very essential for theological education and ministerial formation. At the other end of the discussion on structure was the view that the conventional branch-based model does not do justice to the South Asian context, particularly to the concerns of the subalterns (dalits, tribals/adivasis, women, the poor, people living with disabilities, etc.). Hence there should be a paradigm shift from the Branches/Disciplines approach to Contextual, People-Centered and Issue-Oriented Learning. There were others who advocated a middle path suggesting that the discipline-structured approach and a flexible issue-based approach need to be integrated in the curriculum revision. In the light of the discussions the proposal is now to introduce a new concept of clusters of disciplines which would facilitate integrated and inter-disciplinary approaches in learning. Hence the following structures are formed:

- Cluster I        Biblical (Old and New Testament) studies with languages
- Cluster II        Studies in Theology, Social Analysis and Ethics
- Cluster III       Historical-Missional Studies
- Cluster IV        Religion, Culture and Society
- Cluster V        Ministerial-Communication Studies

During the course of five years the students would be expected to study three types of subjects: foundational, advanced, and regional/local specific. Such an approach would ensure that the students are grounded in the essentials of theological learning and are also simultaneously rooted in the contextual concerns of the times. It would also ensure that the required number of courses is done as well as grant freedom to the colleges to offer extra courses which the colleges think are relevant or important in relation to their respective contexts or ecclesial traditions. Concurrent and Intensive Field Education (practical work) will also be an integral part of the learning involving both faculty and students. Field

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> C. Samson Prabhakar, "Re-visioning the Theological Curriculum as if the Church Mattered". Paper presented at the National Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Mumbai, October 24-25, 2006, p.1.

education will be given credit, not merely in terms of number of grades, but also in terms of hours and diversity of work done: rural, urban, church-related, inter-faith, social action/reform movements, etc.

### Spiritual-Ministerial Formation in Theological Education

In the light of the sharing of church leaders and representatives during the curriculum revision consultations, it was time and again emphasized that theological education is not simply a matter of equipping students with information; it is also important to facilitate commitment formation and character transformation in the life of the student. Knowledge and skill are not adequate for equipping the student and committing him/her to the realization of God's purposes on earth, the reign of God. Information and transformation must be integrated. Furthermore the curriculum should not simply be content with facilitating the theological and ministerial formation of students as individuals but should also aim at the cultivation of a team spirituality of mission and ministry among the students. They are to go out as a body of disciples working together in solidarity for giving expression to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This sense of responsibility and togetherness in mission has to be cultivated. To this end the college faculty is responsible for nurturing a holistic spirituality of knowledge, faith and action, for practicing collegial spirituality and serving as exemplary role models and mentors. However for relevant theological education to be effective, yet another level has to be attained. It has to edify, continuously recommit and empower the local congregations. The laity should be enabled to fulfill their role as light in the world and salt of the earth. The theological education of residential B.D. students and the theological education of the local congregations should therefore go hand in hand. If they are on different wave-lengths, then the transformation and empowerment of the people for God's purposes will not be attained.

### *Conclusion*

The above discussion on the urgencies and priorities of curriculum development in theological education resonate well with the Vision and Mission Statement of the Senate of Serampore College as articulated in the Constitution adopted in 2005:

“We believe that the Triune God has offered the possibility of renewal of life and hope for the entire creation in and through Jesus Christ, and that as an instrument of God, the Church is called to be involved in God's mission of liberation, reconciliation and community building among all peoples through varied forms of ministry.

Set in the midst of people of other faiths and ideologies as well as situations of life-negating forces, we are called upon to equip the whole people of God to respond to the contextual challenges critically and creatively by being faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In (the) light of this faith and self-understanding, we seek to equip ministers, leaders, scholars and the whole people of God to be committed to creative discernment of and active participation in God's liberative mission in the world at large and in South Asia in particular.”

**Roger Gaikwad**