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VALUES BASED LIFE IS SALT OF THE EARTH AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD



Values are essential in life. Values like trust, honesty and integrity are key factors in human development. They are fundamental to leadership. They produce high levels of confidence which in turn encourages people to dream and to reach out to new horizons. High confidence fosters risk-taking. Risk-taking and initiative are fundamental to organizational change and improvement. Values make what one is because the inner and outer selves are the

mirror images. To have one form internally and another form externally creates barriers and causes distance, since one would neither be able to communicate to others, nor would others be able to come close. Some people think "I am honest but no one understands me". This is not honesty. Honesty is as distinct as a flawless diamond which can never remain hidden. The worth of human values shines through one's actions.

I am reminded of the words of Jesus to his disciples: "*You are the salt of the earth. But if the*

salt loses its saltiness... It is no longer good for anything...."

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deed and glorify God." (Mathew Ch. 5: Verses: 13-16)

Our potential to lead others is

directly related to our ability to forge strong relationship. Leadership is building bridges with people and vice versa. Strong and lasting relationships are based on human values. Values promote good governance. They produce the glue. But unfortunately values are either absent or hidden in many people of many cultures and countries today. Problems like under-development, corruption, communal violence, etc., are attributed to high degree of mistrust and dishonesty. We know that corruption is a sin and everyone denounces it, but we practise it. Values are critical to our holistic well-being. We need to give importance to "being" and not "having." It is in "being" that we grow together and it is in "growing together" that we continuously construct a just and peaceful society.

It is time that we preach less about values and practise living a value-based life to initiate changes in our families, Schools and Colleges, industries and business houses and Government departments. Higher degree of trust, honesty, accountability and transparency will result in strong human bond which will definitely foster greater economic growth and better human development.

Fr. J Felix Raj, SJ

Living a Life based on a bedrock of Values

Clayton M Moses
claytonmos@gmail.com

Value-based living, or the conscientious effort to live a life full of intention and honour, has inherent rewards even when those rewards are not immediately clear.

When you wake up in the morning and look in the mirror, do you approve of the person you see? One of the greatest rewards of value-based living is the personal satisfaction that comes from living consistently with your own moral standards. As you make decisions that bring out your best self, you also model the best behavior for your children. We all want to raise committed, conscientious children, and that process begins with committed, conscientious parenting.

Whether we choose to explicitly define our values or not, we will end up living by a value system. That is why being intentional (versus casual) about the values we want to live by is so critical. Eventually, it comes down to two choices: define your value system and intentionally live by it, or do not define it and hope that society will help you or your child make good choices because you naively believe the most dominant societal values are healthy and virtuous.

As an educator who works in helping youth on their journey, I am deeply disturbed by how the values held by youth (and adults) increasingly seem to be technologically driven rather than the product of mature reflection. For example, youth seem to be losing a sense of what it means to have a deep conversation where distractions are eliminated. I even have adult friends who as we are talking, are viewing their hand held

phone or iPhone. It is as if the value of a one-on-one conversation free of distraction has been de-valued. But then again, I think people are increasingly craving something more intimate

What is really so special about values? By definition, *values are beliefs we will passionately defend, they are deeply placed into our nervous system.* Values are what guide us in times of darkness, and protect us when peers are making bad decisions.

One of the most important values a parent (or adult) can emphasize I have learned is Restraint. In this “I get what I want in one-click” society, parents who constantly model restraint are way ahead of those who do not. Teaching your child to not give into to immediate gratification is a skill that will help them succeed far more than any piece of technology.

What is also disturbing is the lack of awareness – among parents or adults – of the importance of having a Values' focus...as a Value in itself

A parent once asked me what it is most important to give adolescents, the time when many youth will for the first time truly test boundaries. The time when whatever values they have inside may be the only thing keeping them from truly dangerous or life-threatening behavior. I told the parent that one of the most important gifts you can give your children is an internalized value system.

Living a values-based life is about a journey of discovering your potential through an intentional focus on a set of virtuous beliefs that you are so passionate about that they will help you stay focused on maturing. They will also create a “reflective space” between your impulses and your actions. A focus on values also forces one to dig



deeper and find inner resources (or develop them) in trying times.

On a personal level, there are few things that feel better than knowing you're living right in your own eyes. When we choose to live contrary to our own ethical compass, it results in what psychologists term cognitive dissonance. Making choices that violate our standards results in anxiety, depression, loss of sleep and low self-esteem. Even when it seems that everyone else is choosing poorly, making positive decisions results in better health and better self-image.

There are still very real benefits for society from an individual's good choices. When we choose to serve those in our community, that positive attitude spreads to those around us. Just as we can choose to get discouraged by the bad in the world, we can also choose to create good in the world through our positive example.

Our decisions to raise value-driven families will not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Societies thrive or die on the actions of concerned individuals. By choosing to live a value-based life, you are ensuring the success of your community.

Values are personal. They are your convictions, your beliefs, and your ethics rolled into one. They are our ethical compass.

Clarifying your personal code of values forms a strong foundation for personal growth and development.

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VALUE BASED LIVING

By Prof Dr. Chandrani Biswas

Associate Professor, Department of English
St. Xavier's College (Autonomous)

Values are deep-seated fundamental beliefs that determine individual standards of ethics, propriety and integrity in life. They constitute the foundations of human character and regulate human behavior in different situations and contexts. However values are not homogeneous as they vary from person to person and changes in socio-historical circumstances. Transformation in value system comes through a process of evolution, with changes in socio-cultural ethos in ever-changing dynamics of the social matrix. The aggregate of values constitute the culture of a society just as the aggregate of values constitute the character of an individual. Social values are reflected in the beliefs and responses to social issues, social interactions, rights and freedoms, performance of tasks, attitude to religion etc.

A balanced value-oriented approach to life rests upon a quest for harmony based on understanding of the needs of others, compassion, accommodation and tolerance. In a need-driven, utilitarian and acquisitive society, one can witness a plethora of anomalies playing the value-based tradition of Indian society. One can witness business practices without morality, accumulation of wealth without hard work, education without character and devotion without austerity. In a globalized world, often governed by pleasure principles, our values seem to dangerously oscillate between our innate desires, hidden ambitions and sublime ideologies and aspiration towards self-improvement.

Irrespective of differences, all religions emphasize upon basic precepts of harmony and unity-acts of goodwill towards fellow beings, words of goodwill sincerely spoken, thoughts of goodwill sincerely harbored and sharing with others all that one has. These precepts if properly followed can make individual life harmonious. Value based living is based on critical interrogations on the amount of changes one will adapt oneself to – materially, emotionally and psychologically. In a world governed by laissez faire politics, mass scale advertisement, swift transformations in social attitudes, each individual has to weigh and measure his personal priorities in shaping his way of life. Newer material products, better technologies and glimmering options do not make a better life. One has to choose with critical discretion that much of materialism or that much of technology that one really requires.

Technological absorption denies each man the serenity of mind, the focus in meaningful social interactions or the happiness in family hours.

A well planned time routine can make others feel valued, elders less lonely and children more wanted. Values also get reflected in our attitude to women. In a predominantly patriarchal social structure, women ought to be granted their space to spread out their wings, to aspire after unattainable ideals.

Stereotyping them into the images of sacrificing, subservient creatures will not create the right values for younger generations as Swami Vivekananda rightly observed that “The idea of perfect womanhood is perfect independence”.

Value based living should ideally emphasize a life also for others as Swami Vivekananda pointed out –



“Spread ideas – go from village to village, from door to door – then only there will be real work...”.

Service to mankind is a form of serving God as he says – “The universal aspect of God means this world, and worshipping it means serving it – this indeed is work, not indulging in ceremonials”. One’s attitude to others should also be influenced by tolerance. In a world rife with conflicts and levels of intolerance, it is useful to consider the mutual respect harbored by two men representing conflicting political ideologies. After being reelected as the President of the Indian National Congress in 1939 – Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose stated with respectful regard about Mahatma Gandhi – “it will always be my aim and object to try and win his confidence for the simple reason that it will be tragic for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of Indian’s greatest man”. Gandhiji on the other hand, while differing from the methods of political resistance used by Subhash Chandra Bose wrote to him “regarding your love for the country and determination to achieve freedom, you are second to none. Your sincerity is transparent. Your

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The aim of education is the knowledge, not of facts, but of values.

- William S. Burroughs

Value based Living

By Prof. Partho Mukherji

Associate Professor, Department of English
St. Xavier's College (Autonomous)

Values represent basic convictions that a specific mode of conduct or end state of existence is personally and socially preferable to an opposite mode of conduct or end state of existence. Values contain a judgmental element in that they carry an individual's ideas as to what is right good or desirable. Values have both content and context and intensity attributes. The content attribute, says that a mode of conduct or end state of existence is important. The intensity attribute specifies how important it is. When we rank an individual's values in terms of their intensity we obtain that person's value system. This system is identified by the relative importance we attach to values such as freedom, pleasure, self-respect, honesty, obedience and equality.

A significant portion of the values we hold is established in our formative years inculcated in us by our parents, teachers and even peers. In this context we note the three stages of practice habit and belief – beliefs turn out to be the values we enforce.

Values tend to be relatively stable and enduring rather than flexible and mutable. The process of questioning one's values, of courses, may result in a change. More often, however, our questioning merely acts to reinforce the values we hold.

Milton Rokeach created the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) which consists of two sets of values, each set containing eighteen individual value items. One set, called terminal values, refers to desirable end states the goals that a person would like to achieve during

his or her lifetime. These include self respect, freedom, a sense of accomplishment, happiness and family security. The other set, called instrumental values refers to preferable modes of behavior, or means of achieving the terminal values. These may include honesty, sense of responsibility, ambition, integrity, courtesy etc.

One of the most widely referenced approaches for analyzing values across cultures and countries was done by Geert Hofstede in the late 1970s. He listed five value dimensions of Natrona culture.

They are –

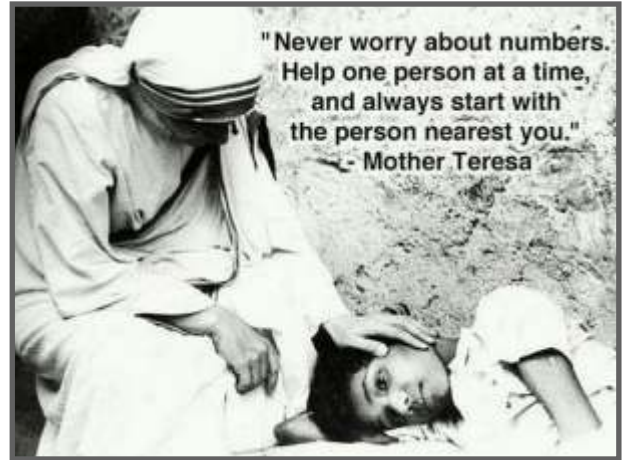
(1) Power Distance-the degree to which people in a country accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. A high power distance rating means that large inequalities of power and wealth exist and are tolerated in the culture. Malaysia is the country with the highest Power Distance.

(2) Individualism versus collectivism – Individualism is the degree to which people prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of groups. Collectivism emphasizes a tight social framework in which people expect other in groups of which they are part of to help and protect them.

(3) Masculinity v/s femininity - the degree to which the culture that views men and women as equals. High femininity thus emphasizes equality between men and women.

(4) Uncertainty avoidance - the degree to which people in a country prefer structured over unstructured situations. A high score on

uncertainty avoidance means an increased level of anxiety about uncertainty and ambiguity. Such



**"Never worry about numbers.
Help one person at a time,
and always start with
the person nearest you."
- Mother Teresa**

cultures tend to impose more rigidly a system of checks and laws and regulations.

(5) Long terms v/s short term orientation : it focuses on the degree of a society's long term devotion to traditional values. People in cultures with long term orientations look to the future and value thrift, persistence and tradition. In a short term orientation, people value the here and the now.

Values teach us that happiness is in the heart, not in the circumstances; values devise visions, they form the measure of a person's ability to succeed and share the success. Behind man is infinite power, before man is endless possibility and around man is boundless opportunity- values shape the right mental and emotional attitude to discover dimensions and define dignity.

Purpose means having a deeper value behind the goals, it is about possessing personal sense of meaning. Value based living ensures that purpose and passion become the building blocks of personal motivation that goes beyond the concern of the individual and reaches out to the fellow creatures. Values teach us that we all are socially relevant integers celebrating our role in this great drama of existence.

Values, Education and Life

Rabindranath Tagore in his *The Centre of Indian Culture* (1919) states that as human beings it is our duty and responsibility to alight the lamp of our minds as it is a part of the illumination of the world. He states, 'To break the lamp of any people is to deprive it of its rightful place in the world festival'.¹ Tagore adds that one's life becomes extremely unfortunate/ miserable if one is deprived of this light; this light in life is 'education' which ushers in the necessity of good values associated with an ambience and spirit of creativity, the most important cause for the development of our India – economical, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual as Tagore believed.² This education is based on good and positive values and is also simultaneously associated with freedom, a liberation of the spirit and the soul enabling the mind to bear a living presence to impart out more in quality and quantity than to receive from outside and this can well be attained through 'an ethos, a culture, an environment within the school and the family, in which respect, peace, honesty and responsibility are the hallmark of how the school community organises itself'.³

Values and education are therefore simultaneously associated for a good living, underlying the importance of the relationship the students inculcate within the school community. The values must not only be present at the heart of the education but should also be present in the educational process or system. An education which acknowledges the mind to be a living object and stimulates its growth is considered to be a 'sincere education' which proves that 'the power of true originality is not

By Saptarshi Mallick
Teacher, St. Xavier's Collegiate School

lacking among our people, only it is trampled down under the dead pressure of a mechanical method and the callousness of contemptuous discouragement'⁴. Good, value-based education should strive to establish the relationship between inevitable action and reaction and that should enable us to lead us beyond the present date. Swami Vivekananda said,

The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion – is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on his / her own legs.⁵

As the Hindu Monk believed, Knowledge is inherent in man; no knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside... We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world have ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind.⁶

Education should ensure a system which encourages the cultivation of positive values in life emphasizing the importance of creating a teaching and learning environment that are characterised by the presence of virtues such as respect, responsibility, tolerance, peace and love.

Value education should therefore be treated as an attitude 'with self-understanding through an inner voyage whose milestones are

knowledge, meditation, and the practice of self-criticism'⁷ among the students which will enable them to realise the importance of a life based on values and also enable them to enjoy the springs of life, the true qualities of existence which once sowed and practiced in life frames it to be golden for ever. Sociologists believe that it is essential to have an emotional development in an individual in order to feel guilty when we do wrong; accept our responsibility for behaving in agreed upon ways; and ensure an enough cognitive development to be able to place ourselves before the world. Carl Jung states,

The shoe that fits one person pinches another; there is no recipe for living that suits all cases. Each of us carries his own unique life form - which cannot be used by any other.⁸

Positive values if inculcated not only remain but also garner our life towards the right path with the right action. In times of crisis in the life of humanity, a life based on values enables the unvanquished Man to retrace his path of conquest, despite all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage⁹ as,

By unrighteousness man prospers, gains what appears desirable, conquers enemies, but perishes at the root.¹⁰

Value based living should therefore be an effort for all of us to reform our life and develop our nation which for Manu was *sad-âchâr* (proper conduct) based on the spirit of truth which is seated in amity and good fellowship. The truth of human unity is realised when we discover and place ourselves among others and this is known as the true definition of love which is the complete and final truth of man i.e. righteousness,

*Ya k varn bahudh saktiyog t
varn n an k n nihit rth dadh ti
vichaitti ch nte visvam dau sa
d vah*

*sa n budhy subhay
samyunaktu.*¹¹

SELF-EMPTYING SERVICE- A Virtue

Rev. Dr. Xavier Savarimuthu, SJ.

Head, Department of Environmental Studies
St. Xavier's College (Autonomous)

The first and foremost thing in life is to realize that we are not alone; we are interconnected into a web of life. It is well portrayed in the maxim "No man is an island". When we are interconnected, the forces at work can be both positive and negative. A great personality like Mother Teresa is accused today as person who rendered service to convert people to Christianity. But the world too has beatified her as "Mother". It is the Divine fire within her that kept the flame of hope in service alive. This was her philosophy, "Never give up, never look down and never look back. Always move forward in life. Don't let anyone make you feel as if you don't belong or unworthy of...ever. Those that do are just not strong enough to handle such greatness. Be proud of who you are. Always walk with your head high, you are never alone..."

The service of mother Teresa was service to the downtrodden irrespective of what religion the afflicted belong to. In the words of Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.), "Christ is at once above and below - above in Himself, below in his people. Fear Christ above, and recognize him below. Here he is poor, with and in the poor; there he is rich, with and in God. Have Christ above bestowing his bounty; recognize him here in his need". And that was in deed mother did,

recognizing the battered Christ in the poor and the needy.

King Alexander the Great realized that death would soon arrive and he would be unable to return to his homeland. He told his officers: "I will soon leave this world. I have three final wishes. You need to carry out what I tell you." His generals, in tears, agreed.

"My first wish is to have my physician bring my coffin home alone. After a gasping for air, Alexander continued: "My second wish is that you scatter the gold, silver, and gems from my treasure-house along the path to the tomb when you ship my coffin to the grave." After wrapping in a woolen blanket and resting for a while, he said: "My final wish is to put my hands outside the coffin."

People surrounding him all were very curious, but no one dare to ask the reason. Alexander's most favored general kissed his hand and asked: "My Majesty, We will follow your instruction. But can you tell us why you want us to do it this way?" After taking a deep breath, Alexander said: "I want everyone to understand the three lessons I have learned.

To let my physician carry my coffin alone is to let people realize that a physician cannot really cure people's illness. Especially when they face death, the physicians are powerless. I hope people will learn to treasure their lives.

My second wish is to tell people not

to be like me in pursuing wealth. I spent my whole life pursuing wealth, but I was wasting my time most of the time.

My third wish to let people understand that I came to this world in empty hands and I will leave this world also in empty hands." he closed his eyes after finished talking and stopped breathing.

In the brief essence of the Philosophy of "Bhagwat Gita" it is said we come with nothing and go with nothing, It says that "Whatever happened, happened for the good; whatever is happening, is happening for the good; whatever will happen, will also happen for the good only. You need not have any regrets for the past. You need not worry for the future. What did you lose that you cry about? What did you bring with you, which you think you have lost? What did you produce, which you think got destroyed? You did not bring anything - whatever you have, you received from here. Whatever you have given, you have given only here. Whatever you took, you took from God. Whatever you gave, you gave to him. You came empty handed, you will leave empty handed. What is yours today, belonged to someone else yesterday, and will belong to someone else the day after tomorrow". The value of one's worth in this world should be in terms of one's self-emptying service to the humanity.

Values, Education and Life (continued from pg. 5)

Notes and References:

1. Rabindranath Tagore, *The Centre of Indian Culture* (1919), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2003, p. 1.
2. Ibid. p. 3.
3. Christopher Drake, 'The Importance of a Values-based learning Environment' in *The Journal of Moral Education*, London: Institute of Education, 2007, p. 1.
4. Rabindranath Tagore, *The Centre of Indian Culture* (1919), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2003, p. 17.

5. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. VII*, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 2000, pp. 147, 148.

6. Ibid. Vol. I, p. 28.

7. Christopher Drake quotes Bernard Combes's *Global Perspectives on Values Education* in 'The Importance of a Values-based learning Environment' in *The Journal of Moral Education*, London: Institute of Education, 2007, p. 1.

8. Carl Jung's quote from website.

9. Rabindranath Tagore, *Crisis In Civilisation* (1941), Calcutta: Visva Bharati Publishing Department, 2000, p. 23.

10. Tagore refers to the sayings of the sages in his *Crisis In Civilisation*. Ibid.

11. The quotation and the translation of the quotation in English language is as Tagore puts it, He who is one, above all colours, and who with his manifold power supplies the inherent needs of men of all colours, who is in the beginning and in the end of the world, is divine, and may he unite us in a relationship of good will.

Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Creative Spirit' in his *The Religion of Man* (1930), New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd. 2005, p. 36.

A session on Ignatian Spirituality



The Goethals Library had conducted a session on Ignatian Spirituality on 7th February, 2015 at the library. Fr. Dr. J. Felix Raj S.J., Principal, St. Xavier's College had taken the session on 'Jesuit Charism and Ignatian Spirituality'. It was well attended by around 15 lay people and a Jesuit. The session was an immense success and the participants had requested for many such sessions with different topics.

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Living a Life based on a bedrock of Values

A life consciously based on personal values is fulfilling and meaningful and may help you answer the question: what is the meaning of life?

Living a value - based life helps you define who you are in the grand scheme of Life. Being grounded in the characteristics and qualities you value provides meaning and purpose to life, helping you answer the questions: *who am I and why am I here?*

***"What one does is what counts. Not what one had the intention of doing."* – Pablo Picasso**

Once you feel that you have a clear sense of the underlying values that you wish to live by, the next step is to translate those values into committed action. While possessing knowledge of what your values are is essential, it will mean very little at the end of the day if there is no action taken to live by those values. You must begin to make the behavioural choice and commitment to making your values manifest through your actions.

Committed action means engaging in large patterns of effective action that are driven and guided by core

values. In order for committed action to be effective, one must be willing to be flexible as circumstances shift and change. Flexibility allows you to adapt to the inevitable changes of life, while still being driven by your underlying values beneath the surface. No matter how many times your behaviors fall short, you can always take the time to reassess your actions and get them back in line with your values.

Knowing your true values, you can begin to set realistic goals based on those values. Goals come and go as circumstances change and evolve, whereas values are a constant driving and motivating force for behaviours.

The larger goal of translating values into committed action is to live a purposeful, intentional life that is guided by your deepest heartfelt values. When your life feels out of balance or without direction, it is quite possible that those feelings are the result of being out of synch with your values or not behaving in accordance with your values. Once you bring into conscious awareness that which is most valued and treasured in your heart, you can begin to take steps towards translating those values into

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VALUE BASED LIVING

spirit of self-sacrifice and suffering cannot be surpassed by anybody".

A truly value based life focuses on the priorities that others nurture, sometimes overlooking deficiencies for a better and productive outcome. One's treatment of others in a value based existence should be based on a nonjudgmental and unbiased approach as Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount – "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Yet one should not fear to undertake newer decisions as it is said in The Bible "If you wait until the wind and the weather are just right, you will never plant anything and never harvest anything".

A value-oriented living emphasize upon diligent work, setting one's priorities right. One's ideals firmly focused and makeup the mind and spirit happy in every respect. It is sometimes more fulfilling to be with others than remain self-absorbed, powerless and solitary as Tagore utters at a moment of poetic self-discovery –

"When the heart is hard and parched up, come upon me with shower of mercy.

... When desire blinds the mind with delusion and dust, O thou holy one, thou wakeful, come with thy light and thy thunder"

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committed action.

Beginning to live in accordance with your true values takes the willingness to engage in committed action. The best of intentions mean very little without behaviours to back them up. Armed with the awareness of some of your most deeply cherished values, begin to move forward towards living a values-based life. Create concrete goals that are in line with your values, make specific short-term and long-term plan of action for how to reach those goals, and finally ... *do it!*



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Researchers at Goethals

- **A. Amrita Anandi** on Christian & Muslim Relations, Jharkhand.
- **Bonny Ghosh** on Contribution of Christian Missionaries of 19th century towards development of Libraries, Kolkata.
- **Dr. Runa Das Chaudhuri** on the evolution of Theosophical Society in late 19th and early 20th century Bengal, Kolkata.
- **Jeroen Van de Velde** on Ancient History, Holsbeek, Belgium.
- **Mou Banerjee** on Brahmabandhab Upadhaya, Kolkata.
- **Priya Middey** on English Literature Folklore, Sociology, Culture Studies, Kolkata.
- **Saptarshi Mallick** on Serampore Missionaries, Hooghly, W.B.
- **Subhalakshmi Pandey** on Colonial Bengal / India, Kolkata.
- **Sudipto Roy** on Ancient History, Kolkata.

mails & emails

• Good stock of research books and ideal ambience for study. - **Subhalakshmi Pandey**, Kolkata.

• Goethals Staff was very co-operative and helpful. The library is well maintained and has a very rich collection of old historical materials. - **Sudipto Roy**, Kolkata.

• The Library has a very good collection of sources hardly available anywhere else. - **Alex Jon Rosales**, New York, USA.



It becomes more necessary to see the truth as it is if you realize that the only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality.

—Mahatma Gandhi



The Goethals Indian Library & Research Society, St. Xavier's, 30 Mother Teresa Sarani, Kolkata 700016, India.

Tel: 0091-33-22801919 ● Email: goethalscal@gmail.com ● Website: www.goethals.in

Director: Fr. Dr. J. Felix Raj, SJ ● Staff: Avijan Mondal, Sourav Ghosh and Sunil Mondol (For Private Circulation Only)