

**IARF Young Adult Programme: 'Planning for the Future'**  
at  
**Angelo Mat. Higher Secondary School**  
**Palayamkottai, Thirunelveli**  
*23<sup>rd</sup> October 2004.*

An interfaith prayer began the programme at 9.30am, with three adults from three religions reading their sacred scripture & praying.

- With Bro. P. Christuraj leading the programme, Bro. Albert Xaviour welcomed everyone with the customary rite of presenting a shawl.
- The presidents for the programme were Mr. M. Subramaniam (IARF Indian President) & Mr. Chidambaram (IARF Thirunelveli Secretary); they talked about IARF, its purpose & the young adult programme, and also shared about their experience in IARF.
- There followed three special deliveries by *Prof. Dr. R. Jayasundararaj* (St. John's College Palayamkottai), *Prof. Sagirtha Begum* (Sathakkathulah Appa College, Palayamkottai) and *Mr. Nagaraj* (jewellery store owner, Tenkasi). They shared about three religions & religious freedom.
- Then the main guest, *Bro. S. Rajan* (General Secretary, Brothers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) spoke about religious freedom, tolerance & harmony.
- Finally Miss Mathangi proposed vote of thanks to all.

After the tea break, we - the young adults - had group discussion, sharing & future planning. 16 of us were present, 6 male & 10 female, with 8 Catholics, 3 Muslims & 5 Hindus.

An interfaith prayer followed by introduction of the participants led into a discussion of the IARF's Statement of Purpose.

Then we divided into three groups and took the following questions for discussion:

1. What you know about your religion?
2. What do you know about others' religion?
3. The relationship between individual & the religion?
4. How does religion help humanity develop good values & equality?
5. How does the young adult become involve in creating & supporting religious harmony? And how will this work be sustained in the future?
6. What are your aims as an IARF young adult?

The presentations on the questions by representatives of the groups evoked a lot of curiosity and lively interactions as we sought to share and know more about *each other's religions, our ideas about religions, & about future plans*. Then the whole group shared information about religious freedom issues in Thirunelveli & other parts of India. We also shared instances of religious discrimination, intolerance & hatred.

The young adults resolved to stay in contact with each other through a network, and to work closely with the IARF's adult membership in the region, to organize interfaith activities in the future. Finally we discussed our future plans:

- 1., We decided to present a religious harmony awareness programme to the school's interfaith children on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2004, conducting speech, essay & poetry competitions with the theme "Religious Freedom & harmony in our country".
2. We decided to have a two-day programme January 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> 2005.
3. Finding interested & concerned young adults to join IARF, with ourselves as IARF young adults living lives that are exemplary to all other young adults.
4. We resolved to keep actively in contact with each other.

Before lunch we had an evaluation of this half-day programme. All the participants were very happy with it.

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