

### ICPA AGM held in Nagpur

The 53rd AGM was held on 25 February, 2017 in the Pastoral Centre of Nagpur Archdiocese. AGM began at 9.30 am. Father John Froz, EC member for the Western Region, conducted a short prayer. President Father Alfonso Elengikal welcomed the gathering. He expressed his gratitude to Bishop Salvatore Lobo, ecclesiastical advisor to ICPA, for accompanying the ICPA and for being present also for the AGM. He thanked the local organizers Father Lijo, Sister Lissy and team for the smooth conduct of the convention the previous day. He exhorted all present to take the mission of ICPA forward, especially by the active participation of the energetic young members – “the light of ICPA has to be passed on,” he said. He also welcomed the new members. Before the next item of the meeting could be taken up the Secretary Jose Vincent invited all the members to observe a minute of silence remembering Father Victor Nariveli, and Father Vijay Issac. Father Nariveli passed away on 14 May 2016. He was the Secretary of ICPA from

1969-1975. Father Issac passed away on 17 September 2016 at Alleppy. He was an active member of ICPA for many years and he was the Joint Secretary at the time of his sudden demise. At this time prayers were also requested for Msgr. George Veliparambil, who has not been in the best of health recently. Msgr. Veliparambil was the President of ICPA from 1992 to 1995 and Secretary from 1983 to 1989. Next, the Secretary introduced the new members – Father Joby Mathew, Sister Bindu Abraham, Sister Tessa Joseph, Mr. Siju Chandy, and Father Joy Prakash. Father Raj Susai, SDB, and Salesian Bulletin from Chennai, an institutional member, were introduced in absentia. AGM endorsed their membership. Each was given a copy of the ICPA Constitution. Each of them



A view of the general body

expressed their happiness in being accepted as members. The Secretary presented the minutes of the last AGM held in Pune. Members suggested that the report should have also included the report on the convention held the previous day. After this the Secretary's working report was presented. Some interventions and discussions followed: regarding ICPA website, Delhi office of ICPA, and the Constitution. An assurance was given to the General Body

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### Christian Scribes Respond to the Present-day Atrocities on Minorities and Dalits.

The Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre, Nagpur, was abuzz with activity much before the time mentioned in the Programme Agenda - which was 9 a.m. - on the 24th February, 2017. In a short while the 22nd ICPA Convention on the theme 'Media's Response to the Present-day Atrocities on Minorities and Dalits' was being inaugurated.

The inauguration of the event began in the august presence of Most Reverend Abraham Viruthakulagara, Archbishop of Nagpur, as well as Most Reverend Salvatore Lobo, the Bishop of Baruaipur, and the chairman of CBCI Commission for Social Communications. Sharing the dais with them were Rev. Fr. Jerome Pinto, Vicar General of Archdiocese of Nagpur, Fr. Alfonso Elengikal, President of ICPA, Mr. Jose Vincent, Secretary of ICPA & Fr. Ambrose Pinto, the key-note speaker.

A short prayer service was led by Sr. Lissy with melodious music and hymns

provided by two young representatives of the Jesus Youth ministry.

The traditional lamp was lit by the dignitaries - in a gesture that dispels the



Members gathered for the convention

darkness that engulfs the Indian Media, leading us to take a more active part in bringing to the fore the issues that plague the minorities and dalits in India.

The dignitaries as well as the gathering of more than fifty people were warmly and cordially welcomed by Fr. Lijo Mampoothara, the local organizer of the event.

Archbishop Viruthakulagara in his inaugural address extolled the Indian constitution as being beautiful and sacrosanct, while exhorting Christians to uphold it in their daily lives, with as much importance as the Holy Bible.

Father Ambrose Pinto, Principal of Aloysius College, Bangalore, gave the key-note address. Father Pinto started off by pointing out the

importance of Nagpur as the headquarters of the RSS as well as a prominent centre of Dalit Buddhists. He lamented the lack of dalit journalists for

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## ICPA AGM ....

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by the President and Secretary that the issue of a website for the ICPA dragging on for long would be taken up soon probably with the help of Father Joacquin Fernandes, SDB of Mumbai. A committee to revise the constitution was set up. Ignatius Gonsalves (Convenor), Jose Vincent and Francis Arackal are its members. The committee is to present a draft to the next EC.

In his address to the AGM Bishop Lobo exhorted the members to be professionals, prompt in carrying out duties. He also stressed the importance of making use of the Delhi office.

This was followed by meetings in regions - North, South, West - for 45 minutes.

Since only Father Alfonso was present from East, he joined the Western group. Secretaries of each region reported back to the AGM: work done so far and proposals for future activities.

Treasurer Jayan Nakapuzha presented the accounts. Many members sought clarifications regarding audited account;

sale and purchase of ICPA property. AGM approved the resolution appointing Vishnu Rajendran & Company, Kochi represented by Mr Jose Maveli as the new auditor. The resolution was proposed to be passed by Father F M Britto and seconded by Mr Reggie David.

Father Sunil Damor, SVD from Jharsuguda was chosen as the EC representative for North in place of Francis Arackal who was made the Joint Secretary.

A new incentive package for members who have been keeping away from the Association for long was approved by the General Body to keep their membership alive. The package amount is Rs 1,000 for individual members and Rs 3,000 for institutional members.

Vice-President ICPA, Ignatius Gonsalves, explained the significance of ICPA Press ID card. A professionally designed card is introduced for the first time for members of the ICPA. The ID card is to be worn especially at ICPA events.

Joint-Secretary ICPA, Francis Arackal,

informed the members regarding the proposal to form a Media Awareness Team (MAT) to conduct training programme across the country for budding writers and journalists. Any of the members wanting to be part of this team could give his/her name to any of the office-bearers.

There was some discussion regarding the next convention and AGM: Theme, Place, and Date. Delhi, Indore, Guwhati, and Jabalpur were proposed to be probable places. One theme proposed is: Women's Empowerment and Media. Members are welcome to suggest topics till 31 March, 2017.

Importance of celebrating the Press Month (February) was emphasized and the proposal was to celebrate it in various regions, with EC members taking the lead. Anto Akkara presented a draft of the ICPA Press Statement for AGM's perusal. Some discussion followed.

## Christian Scribes Respond...

contd. from page 1

the simple reason that most media houses are owned by persons of higher castes. And when dalits are not represented their stories are not told or known to outsiders. Fr. Pinto said that the media is to be blamed for the stereo-typed, degrading image of Muslims as terrorists and Christians as converters, thus giving legitimacy to violence against them.

The two panel discussions saw eminent members of local literati, educationalists, and activists speaking on topics such as

'judicious and unbiased reporting', 'representation of minorities and adivasis in journalism', 'necessity of a free media', 'the legal perspective on the role of media', 'media as harbinger of change' and 'individual contributions to societal change'. The panelists included Dr. Ms. Thrity Patel, Mrs. Shanoor Mirza, Dr. Shoma Sen, Dr. Tejinder Singh Rawal, Dr. Yugal Rayulu, Dr. G.S. Khwaja, Dr. John Menachery, Dr. Supantha Bhattacharya while the moderators were Mr. Kasta Dip and Mr. Ignatius Gonsalves.

ICPA awards were conferred on Mr. James Edayody, the *Sunday Shalom* Correspondent from Mumbai and Mr. M. Gengaikumar, Writer and Publisher of Books and CDs. The torchbearers of media Fr. Varghese Paul and Mr. Ignatius Gonsalves, along with the *Rakno Weekly*, were felicitated. Nagpur journalists Mr. Charles Salve, Mr. Samuel Gunashekar and Mr. Rahul Awasare were also felicitated.

**Sr. Benigna Menezes**

## Archbishop Abraham Laments the Attacks on Minorities and Dalits

The registered office of ICPA is: 41/163, Banerji Road, Cochin-682018, Ernakulam District, Kerala.

Abraham Viruthakulangara, the Archbishop of Nagpur, lamented the spate of atrocities against the minorities and dalits and he said these are a wakeup call to us. He stressed that it is our responsibility to give prompt responses to anything against us, anywhere in the country. Archbishop Viruthakulangara was speaking after inaugurating the 22nd National Convention of Christian journalists at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre, on 24 February.

He pointed out how various politicians and leaders use the term 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family) whenever it is convenient to them, while carrying out or supporting activities that are aimed at creating or increasing discord among people of various religions.

The Archbishop said that the Indian constitution is beautiful and sacrosanct. "We Christians need to hold the Holy Bible in



one hand and the constitution in the other", he said. He posed a question to those present: Is the constitution being adhered to, especially in the context of minorities?

The Archbishop also mentioned the recent widespread celebration of the conferring of sainthood on Mother Teresa, wherein politicians and statesmen across the country extolled the virtues of Christians in general and their various contributions in the development of India. He expressed disappointment in the fact that these facts did not stop these very politicians from hatching conspiracies to oust all non-Hindu citizens from our own motherland. They are

prepared to do whatever it takes to do away with us - the minorities.

He ended his speech on the note that although we believe in the Providence of God, we are not exempted from making an effort at our own level.

**Ancie Wilfred**

## Nagpur Convention Provides Forum for Lively Panel Discussions

Nagpur Convention of Christian Journalists witnessed two lively panel discussions. In the first panel Dr. Dr.Yugal Rayulu, Mr. Tejinder Singh Rawal, Dr. G. S. Khwaja, Dr. Shoma Sen took part. Dr. Rayulu said Democracy is possible only with an unbiased media. We need judicious reporting by the media. The media needs to uphold the clauses of the constitution of India and not religious or political agendas.

Mr. Rawal gave the reasons for bias in media reporting: Shareholders in the media houses are political parties - major share with BJP, lesser share with Congress & 5 to 10% with smaller political parties. Very little power with the owner or founder of the house - who may have started out with a strong, journalistic fire in his belly. Atrocities on minorities or Dalits are too frequent to be news-worthy. It is not profitable to the media houses to print these issues every time they happen. Even Dalit journalists are hampered from providing judicious reports on atrocities on the Dalits due to the fact that they are dependent on the shareholders in their parent media house. Social media is employed by the ruling party to create a pro-ruling party and anti-opposition image using grand, glorified images and funny/humorous images or quotes, respectively. The educated masses need to be enlightened about the actual situation in the country. Dalits have to be educated. Market reforms incorporating more Dalits in the employment sector are needed.

Dr. G. S. Khwaja highlighted the situation of Muslims in Vidarbha. The last speaker of the panel Dr. Shoma Sen chose to speak on the tribal minorities than on women as a minority.

Mr. Kasta Dip, Director India Peace

Centre Nagpur moderated the session. He concluded saying if peace is to be brought about in



A view of the first panel

India, it has to be brought about by journalists. Christian journalists need to make their presence in every village across this country just as the RSS has their cadres posted in every village. They need to be the defenders of justice for minorities and Dalits across the country.

The first speaker Dr. John Menachery began by asking: Is the media truly free? A free media is absolutely

essential for a strong, healthy, pulsating democracy, in a highly heterogeneous country like India. However, with the liberalization of market economy, which commenced in the 1990s, the control of the media in India

has passed from the government to private media houses that are indirectly controlled by political parties and the corporate world. Given the depressing realities, the willingness and vigilance of the Indian media to respond to atrocities is debatable. There is a need for a rural network of journalists to gather news from rural areas.

The marginalized need to tell their own stories. Each educated person can become a Citizen Journalist - wherein we can tackle the issue of lack of coverage of minorities' problems or news. Social

media should be put to great use as a tool to fight against atrocities on the marginalized.

Dr. Ms. Thrithi Patel presented Legal perspectives on the role of media. Freedom of the press is a very important right given to the citizens of India by the constitution. RTI is an offshoot of this right. She left a poser: How will it be if the



A view of the second panel

Mr. Ignatius Gonsalves, the moderator of the second panel discussion, while opening the proceedings said the media is a necessary evil. If we don't read the newspapers we are uninformed, while if we do we are misinformed. He put forward a few positive thoughts about the media.



media is actually given the freedom that our constitution has promised us?

Dr. Supantha Bhattacharya lamented that just as atrocities against Dalits have increased, the space given to news about them has diminished. In the United States of American liberty is a statue. In our land, liberty for Dalits is a statue. What media sows in the morning, the public harvests in the evening. Mainstream media today

is not for the poor or underprivileged. It is sold just like any other commodity. Most Dalit journalists invariably end up in the regional media. They are dissuaded from exposing stories that talk about atrocities on their own communities. Journalists need to be powerful change leaders.

The last peaker Mrs. Shanoor Mirza spoke about media coverage of minority news. She posed the following questions: Why should we depend on

others to become our spokesperson? Why don't we each take up the onus of spreading enlightenment even if it is to just one person at a time?

The moderator concluded by saying that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

All the panelists and the two moderators were felicitated with ICPA mementos.

**Ancie Wilfred**

## ICPA Confers Annual Awards

Amidst the 22nd Annual Convention of Christian Journalists held on 24 February, ICPA awards were conferred on prominent writers and achievers.

James Edayodi, *Sunday Shalom* Correspondent for Mumbai, was presented the ICPA-Father Louis Careno Award by Bishop Salvadore Lobo, Chairman of the CBCI Office for Social Communications. Secretary of the CBCI Office for SC/BC Commission Father Z Devasagayaraj presented the ICPA-SC/BC Commission Award to Mr Gengaikumar from Thiruvannamalai.

ICPA honoured a senior member of the Association Father Varghese Paul from Ahmedabad, ICPA Vice-president and editor *Jeevanatham* weekly Ignatius Gonsalves and *Raknno* weekly, a founding institutional member from Mangalore, for receiving special recognition last year. Nagpur journalists Charles Salve, Samuel Gunashekar and Rahul Awasare were also felicitated.



Addressing the gathering, Bishop Lobo said: "Communicators need to be more alert and professional to be the salt of the earth." He asked the journalists to communicate hope and uphold the dignity of people and Christian values through their writings. He quoted Pope Francis saying, "Live in hope - give hope." and "With Christ everything is possible for us."

## Dr. Ambrose Pinto Highlights Media's Response to Atrocities against Minorities and Dalits

The Key-note address was presented by Fr. Ambrose Pinto:

He began with the geographic location of this gathering of ICPA - Nagpur - being an important city because it houses both the RSS as well as a prominent Buddhist centre. Fr. Pinto went on to mention that conversion in India is never about religion - it is political. He quoted Dr. B. R. Ambedkar - the Father of our constitution - as saying, "Though I was born a Hindu, I will never die one." Dr. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism in the largest conversion ceremony in the world where around 5 lakh people embraced Buddhism as an escape from the rigid Hindu caste system.

Fr. Pinto said that the concept of Hindutwa is anti-constitutional. The Manusmriti, which Hindutwa proponents are touting as the ideal replacement for our constitution, propagates division on the basis of caste and does not even recognize religions other than Hinduism.

Fr. Ambrose Pinto mentioned a question that was posed to a BJP leader by a dalit representative. The question was: What would be the caste of the dalits who accept the call for Ghar Wapsi? The answer - whether spelled out or not - is that they will be the lowest rung of society, fit only for menial labour, because according to the Manusmriti, the dalits emerged from the feet of Lord



Brahma.

Fr. Pinto went on to explain that local or regional media is more communal than the National media. This sad state of affairs is due to the following:

1. In most criminal atrocities against minorities it is the police reporting the event, rather than a journalist. The facts are given to the reporters by the police who reach the location before anybody else.
2. Small / regional newspapers depend on bigger ones as a source of their news.
3. The news-desks or agencies that provide news to most media houses are unprofessional and biased.



## ICPA Press Statement

Nagpur, February 25, 2017

The 53rd general assembly of Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA) - forum of Christian journalists, editors and publishers - held at the Pastoral Centre, Nagpur during February 24-25 has urged the media and the church to wake up to the growing atrocities on the minorities and the marginalized.

"We need to wake up to what's happening around us. The atrocities are a wake-up call for the media, the church and others," said Archbishop Abraham Virithukulangara of Nagpur inaugurating the 22nd National Convention of Christian Journalists on February 24 - as part of ICPA assembly attended by 40 delegates. "The great constitutional guarantees of the nation is not a reality for many. The media should help and inspire us and others to respond to the atrocities. Delayed response is no response," reminded Archbishop Viruthukulangara addressing the convention with the theme

'Media response to the atrocities against minorities/dalits.'

Jesuit social analyst Father Ambrose Pinto in his keynote address lamented that "The mainstream media promotes by and large low-intensity communalism." Father Pinto, former director of Indian Social Institute in New Delhi, pointed out that the big media networks neglect issues of justice when the victims are from the oppressed communities.

"Biased media makes democracy hallow and shallow as media's role is to be watchdog. People's issues are often ignored by the media," said Prof Rayalu Yugal of Dharampeth Science College. "Communicators need to be more alert and professional to be the salt of the earth," urged bishop Salvadore Lobo, chairman of the Commission for Social Communication of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI). The ICPA Assembly urged the central and state governments to take effective



Mr. Anto Akkara

measures to uphold the fundamental rights and to curb atrocities against religious minorities and marginalized groups.

The assembly also decided to set up MAT (media awareness team) to conduct training program across the country for budding writers and journalists.

## EDITORIAL

ICPA has been on an upward turn for some time now thanks to the active and hardworking leadership it received. Members experienced this at least in the last three major events organized by it – The Northern Region meeting together with the AGM held at Agra, the national convention and AGM held at Pune, and the recent national convention and AGM held at Nagpur. Above all ICPA has been able to fulfill a long cherished dream – having a national office in the national capital Delhi. But we need to do more to make ICPA vibrant and relevant. Towards this end some significant decisions have been taken: to put the accounts in order, holding regional conventions and meetings similar to the national one, creating a new website, taking ICPA to the Social Media in a big way, bringing out the newsletter periodically, forming a Media Awareness Team (MAT) for conducting training programmes for budding journalists and writers, and so forth. Putting the national office to good use remains a challenge. Over the decades members of ICPA operated mainly in the realm of print-media. But as all of us are aware most print media have established a big and useful presence on Social Media though reluctantly initially. For, this was the option for survival in the age of the Digital and New Media. This applies to the ICPA as well and it can act as a catalyst in this arena for other Christian publications, if that hasn't been already done. The main purpose of ICPA members taking to the Social Media is to express their views on the cultural, economic, political, religious, social, and national issues confronting the nation and the Christian community. Great hope has sprung that ICPA can expect better days ahead.

### Office Address of ICPA

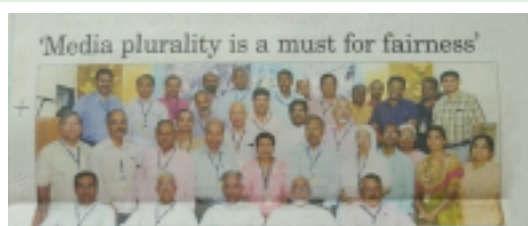
The Delhi office address is : Ground Floor, Plot NO 11, Jaipuria Enclave, Kaushambi, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201010

### Loving remembrance on behalf of Indian Catholic Press Association



Fr. Vijay Isaac

## ICPA in the News



Participants at National convention of Christian Journalists along with Boldizarova and other guests

## \* Draft Response

THE Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPP) together with the Archdiocese of Nagpur held a series of all-level consultation of Christian Intellectuals on the National Centre in the Archdiocese's House, Nagpur. The theme of the event was: "Media's response in the present day America and India and Mission".

The Archbishop of the Nagpur Archdiocese, Most Rev. Vincent Ganesan presided over the inauguration.

The invited the Indian Constitution as being beautiful and sacrosanct, while advising Christians to uphold it as their daily lives, with as much importance as the Holy Bible.

By Dr. Jennifer Finkle who studied the impact of the 1997-1998 El Niño on the health of the children of the poor in the slums of the city of Bogotá. Her findings were published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in November 1998. Her findings show that the lack of adequate housing for the common poor is a major reason that when a community is not prepared, there is a very high risk of illness or death. Her findings also show that the lack of adequate housing is a major reason that when a community is not prepared, there is a very high risk of illness or death. Her findings also show that the lack of adequate housing is a major reason that when a community is not prepared, there is a very high risk of illness or death.

The two-part ethics questions are read out loud to reporters, administrators and all those speaking on the media table during and unbiased reporting, representation of minorities and advice in journalism, necessity of a free media, the legal principles that are the rule of media, media technology and

change and individual contributions to societal change. The parashads included DN Dharwadkar, Manooji Manu, Dr. Shrihari Joshi, Dr. Tejendra Singh Rawal, Dr. Pragalbh Rawal, Dr. G. S. Khosla, Dr. John Menacherry, Dr. Suparna Bhattacharya while the moderators were Kanta Chop and Bradley Goodrich.

ICFA awards were conferred on James Foley by the Sunday Watson Correspondent from Mumbai and M. Gopalakrishna, writer and publisher of *India and CINA*, the leading issuers of media in Virginia Post and Virginia Correspondents, along with the RAKONN Weekly, were invited. The session was guided by many more eminent personalities associated with the RAKONN Bishop Schneider (Cm, Ft. Alliance and Ft. Development).



**Letter to the Editor**  
**written by the president of ICPA**  
**for the release of Fr. Tom**

Dear Editor,  
I was watching the  
Doordarshan news  
telecast, this evening,  
and I saw DD giving a  
detailed coverage of



External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's statement in the Parliament regarding the recent attacks on Indians in the United States. She assured that the government of India is doing everything possible to see that such incidents never occur again. I was very happy, as the citizens of the country has every right to know the government's version of and its stand on the uncalled for attacks on their countrymen in the US, or elsewhere.

My thoughts soon went to Fr Tom Uzhunnalil, who was kidnapped and tortured by the IS men, keeping him in unlawful custody for more than a year, now. I do not think that the government of India has taken yet any serious steps in getting Fr Tom released from the IS custody. Nor do I see anyone, including the officialdom of the Church in India, taking any serious steps to put enough pressure on the government to take all possible steps to get him released, if he is still alive of which I have my serious doubts, other than staging some weak demonstrations here and there, and of course praying and fasting which alone will not work the miracle needed in this case.

Maybe we have laid more emphasis on the fact Tom Uzhunnalil is a “Catholic Priest” and a “Salesian” and placed very little stress on the fact that he is a citizen of India with equal right to be protected which any Citizen of India working outside the country should receive. I wonder why the Church in India with all the resources available to her has not spoken strongly in one voice, and demanded that Tom Uzhunnalil, an Indian Citizen, should not be allowed to be kept in unlawful custody, tortured mercilessly by the IS, and continue to be languishing in their custody for so long!. For me, Tom Uzhunnalil is an Indian first, then a Catholic Priest and a Salesian next, if at all that need to be told! Let us forget everything else, and demand that Tom should be released because he is an Indian citizen! Hopefully, more patriotic Indians will join hands with us.

--Fr Alfonso Elenqikal,SSP

- **ICPA Members are welcome to contribute to the newsletter: Short articles, sharing of media apostolate, letters to the editor ... Next issue will be in July, 2017.  
E-mail: [farackal@gmail.com](mailto:farackal@gmail.com)**
- **Next EC will be held on 3 June in Kochi. Members are welcome to send in their suggestions to the Secretary: [jvincent@rediffmail.com](mailto:jvincent@rediffmail.com)**