

faith of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement” (Decree #4) as a benchmark for all Jesuit works. This caused some universities to circle the wagons even closer for more protection. But the most recent general congregation—the 34th in 1996—reaffirmed the faith/justice challenge and integrated into it a profound concern for culture as the environment in which faith and justice are lived out. Valentín Menéndez, S.J., the assistant to the superior general of the Jesuits for northern Latin America spoke to the rectors about how this faith/justice/culture theme should influence the universities entrusted to the Jesuit Order: serious research, dynamic teaching, and a significant impact on the societies the universities serve.

A complementary theme—the August 1996 letter of the Latin American Jesuit provincial superiors on the effects of neoliberalism—was developed by Francisco de Roux, S.J., the coordinator of social concerns for Northern Latin America. He challenged the universities to go beyond the clichés that simply attack neoliberalism and propose viable alternatives.

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Unlike what might have happened several decades ago, the rectors responded with enthusiasm to the challenge and, as an example, advanced an ongoing AUSJAL project on the nature of poverty, its causes, and proposals for solution. Each university will encourage its scholars to tackle the problem in different ways and then pool their results for continent-wide solutions. It was clear to the delegates that an unbridled market without ethical norms would lead to further gaps between the tiny rich minority and the vast poor majority, and the measurement of economic growth on the basis of financial speculation instead of increased production and employment.

Several rectors mentioned that this integration of efforts by the universities and the social apostolate is a sign of the maturing of the Jesuit Order itself—an indication of the ability of its institutions to see their purpose as lying outside themselves and in the community beyond its walls. Preparation of personally successful professionals will not guarantee that the universities will have achieved their mis-

sion; success will be measured by the impact these professionals have on “shipwrecked societies.”

Although most of the rectors are Jesuit priests, they clearly affirmed the Thirty-Fourth General Congregation decree on the laity as crucial colleagues in a joint task. They stressed the idea that the laity are not merely helpers in a Jesuit “mission”; some even said that the role of Jesuits was to help the laity in their role. By sheer numbers we see that the institutions for which the Jesuits are given responsibility are administered and staffed largely by lay women and men. Although the rectors hoped there would be more Jesuits available for the university vocation in the future, there was no pining for the good old days of the “long black line” or seeing the laity as a “necessary evil” that had to be tolerated because of the diminishing number of Jesuits. But real involvement of the laity in integral responsibility for the universities is still a goal of the future in some institutions that tend to identify Jesuit “power” as a prerequisite for Ignatian “influence.”

E-mail will guarantee that the dialogue on common projects will increase over the next few years—especially the faith/justice/culture challenge, a greater role for lay women and men, and programs in Ignatian spirituality. It will be important to study the development of these significant trends over the next few years to see what happens on the ground. Will lofty ideals be confined to mission statements or will they lead to the transformation of universities which will truly transform societies?

A Training Program for Teachers at the Royal University of Phnom Penh

A Joint Project among Jesuit Universities

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GENERAL BACKGROUND

There are 10 institutions at the tertiary level in the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania. Two of these are colleges and the others, universities. Of the latter, two—Sophia in Tokyo and Elisabeth University of Music in Hiroshima—are on the island of Honshu in Japan. Sogang is our university in Seoul, Korea. Fu Jen University—near Taipei in Taiwan—is jointly run by the Society

of Jesus, the SVD fathers, and the diocesan clergy. Five of the 10 schools are in the Philippines. In Manila there is the Ateneo de Manila university, while two other universities—Xavier in Cagayan de Oro and the Ateneo de Davao in Davao City—are on the southern island of Mindanao. In the Bicol region of Luzon, the Ateneo de Naga and—on the southwestern tip of Mindanao—the Ateneo de Zamboanga are two colleges that will soon become universities. Further south—in the city of Yogyakarta on the Indonesian island of Java—is Sanata Dharma University. A quick look at a map will remind us that these ten schools are spread over a vast, culturally diverse geographical area. Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia all represent different Asian languages and cultures. The Philippine schools in themselves represent another five different subcultures and dialects or languages.

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THE PROJECT

Fr. General has emphasized the need for our universities and colleges to collaborate more than they have in the past. Going back to the formation of the assistancy there were efforts to work together. Lack of manpower, regional differences, and the necessity to confront very different types of problems have been factors inhibiting cooperation. All of the schools are aware of the need to collaborate and are eager to find ways in which we can work together with the other Jesuit schools. In the past few years improvement in transportation, electronic communications, and the general economic situation in the countries of the assistancy have all made finding common projects more feasible.

This brief article describes one concrete effort that, though small, is particularly meaningful. It began with a meeting of the presidents of Sophia, Sogang, Fu Jen, the Ateneo de Manila, Xavier University, the Ateneo de Davao, and Sanata Dharma in Manila in August 1994. A major topic at this meeting was collaboration. Several prospects were discussed and one joint project was decided upon. The Ateneo de Manila was at that time already providing some training for future teachers at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. The poverty of Cambodia and the recent history of that country point out the obvious need for help from the international community. The presidents meeting in Manila thought that it would be particularly meaningful for our Jesuit schools to collaborate on a project to

help train teachers for this government school in Cambodia.

They decided that they would provide financial support for this project and bring Cambodian teachers to the Ateneo de Manila for a six-month retraining program. This was deemed a better solution than spreading the teachers out over different schools in different cultural and language areas. English could be used more easily in Manila, and the Cambodians would more easily form a group that could work together when they returned to Phnom Penh if they went through retraining together.

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Scholarship money was provided by the different schools. It should be noted that Cambodian teachers are forced to supplement their salary of U.S.\$20 to U.S.\$25 a month by various part-time jobs in Phnom Penh. They would be without this income during the six months in the Philippines. For this reason the scholarships have to include a stipend for the families of the teachers.

As a result of this cooperation, the Ateneo de Manila was able to broaden and formalize its program. The first six Cambodian teachers began the program in September 1995 and returned to Phnom Penh in early 1996. As a result of an evaluation at that time, we decided that the project should continue for another year. The same schools repeated their contributions, and a second group of six teachers is now finishing up its six months at the Ateneo.

Plans are now under way to continue the program for next year. It has turned out to be an invaluable contribution to the upgrading of the faculty at the Cambodian university. We judge the second year of the program to have been even better than the first. This is because those running the project have been able to build on their experiences. Teachers from the Royal University of Phnom Penh will soon be chosen and begin a special English-language training course in Phnom Penh before leaving the country. The third year of the program will begin in September 1997.
