



CURIA PRÆPOSITI GENERALIS

SOCIETATIS IESU

ROMA - Borgo S. Spirito, 4

January 13, 1999

Gorgonio S. Esguerra, S.J.
President, International Association
of Jesuit Business Schools,
and
Romuald D'Souza, S.J.
Director, Goa Institute of Management
Goa, India

Dear Fathers:

It is a great pleasure to address through you the participants in the "Sixth Annual Forum of the International Association of Jesuit Business Schools" which is being hosted this year under the auspices of the "Goa Institute of Management." The holding of this meeting in Goa has a particular relevance for Jesuits. For it was in Goa that Saint Francis Xavier disembarked for the first time in 1542, and it is in Goa where his remains are venerated. Old Goa marks the point of departure of the evangelizing and educational enterprises of the Society of Jesus in India, which have spread out from there into all of Asia.

It is quite significant that the route which took Francis Xavier to India was the same which the traders of his time also followed. Although with very different motivations, the merchants and the Gospel arrived in the same ships. Both encountered peoples and civilizations distinct from their own, and each in their own way faced the challenge of a diversity of cultures and a contrast of values. The venue of your meeting -- India -- and the theme of the Forum, "Culture and Values. The Context of Business," are part of a problematic which remains current today. People in business and messengers of the Gospel still travel along the same paths, in a world of inequalities and diversities.

The Forum which you are holding for the sixth consecutive year will no doubt be a new step forward towards the fulfillment of the objectives of the IAJBS: to develop and to promote the concept of management as profession and vocation in various societies and countries, in solidarity with each other, as well as with the poor. All of this, under a clearly Ignatian inspiration, which is heading you each time more fully, to translate words into deeds.

I would like to particularly emphasize the efforts of schools in developed countries to support those in developing countries; your continuous striving to help students to understand the profession of business as a call from God and as a response to the Churches appeal to universal holiness; the valuable contribution of your schools in Latin America towards meeting the problems of poverty in their countries; as well as the pledge of your professional schools of business to reflect their Catholic and Jesuit character in their own cultural settings. I congratulate you also for your support of the "Symposium on Catholic Social Thought and Management Education."

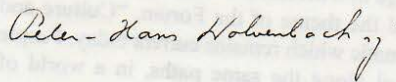
The theme of culture, which you are going to reflect upon in this Forum, is one which the Society of Jesus also considers as one of the essential dimensions of its mission. As expressed in our most recent documents, the evangelization of cultures constitutes a fundamental aspect of our apostolate. The Spirit of the Lord is present in the diversity of human cultural experiences, and it is necessary to discover and make explicit the liberating force of the Gospel within them. The voice of the Gospel echoes in traditional cultures and in modernity.

The drama of our time, as the most recent popes have emphasized, is the rupture between the Gospel and culture, between faith and reason. Translated into your own specific context, the drama is the rupture between business and ethics, between profession and vocation, between traditional or modern culture and the Christian faith. The prodigious progress of science and technology cannot follow a dynamic which prescind from the deepest human values, and does not take into account the values specific to each culture, enlightened by the values of the Gospel.

Your meeting in India will no doubt provide you with an excellent opportunity to expand your own cultural patrimony and the strengthen of your value system. It will also enable you to enrich Christian thought and practice with new philosophical, religious and cultural outlook. The ships which centuries ago brought Francis Xavier to the Orient should return to the West today filled today with other types of riches.

I congratulate the IAJSB and its leaders for their commitment to making present the Gospel of Jesus in the world of business and in the diversity of cultures. May the Lord richly bless your work, and may Francis Xavier, the man who knew no frontiers, open your spirits to the inexhaustible dimension of the greater divine service.

Devotedly yours in Christ,



Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
Superior General