

Stress on Asian Values for Human Future



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An Indian scholar presenting key note address at the plenary session of International [Conference](#) on Asian Values for Human Future being held at Assam Don bosco University stressed the role of intellectuals in encouraging and promoting values to ensure global future.

Picking nuggets of wisdom and values of great world civilizations, the architect of the first ever conference of the sort held in India and particularly in the northeast [Prof](#) Thomas Menamparampil spelt out three important points that scholars need to keep in mind in the promotion of Asian values.

“Intellectuals must develop a sense of responsibility,” said [Prof](#) Menamparampil quoting author John Maynard Keynes who said, “the ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else.”

“Practical men (actual rulers) are often slaves to outdated ideas,” he argued saying “even the most anti-intellectual society today has need of people who have ideas towards togetherness if they wish to make headway.”

[Prof](#) Menamparampil who spent [over](#) sixty years as teacher and peace promoter in northeast India spoke on historic continuity of values. He stressed, “we don’t need to re-[start](#) with values, but rediscover and re-interpret values for our times.”

“It is when divergent views and convergence of thought that the values fertilize each other holding out hope for future generations,” said [Prof](#) Menamparampil explaining his position.

He cautioned some 40 scholars representing 20 universities and [8](#) institutions from 11 countries,” it is not an Asian chauvinistic expression [against](#) western contributions and values, but a humble and intense desire to re-interpret Asian values – not a defence of authoritarianism, nor a national or cultural fundamentalism.”

He recalled how “Gandhiji brought the religious concept of ahimsa to social and political context of satyagraha making it meaningful for social, political and religious activists from other continents like Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu.

[Prof](#) Menampampil explained that Gandhiji took the Indian religious concept of self renunciation for social action promoting swadeshi movement to mobilize Indians for independence from British colonial power.

He reminded the audience quoting historian Christopher Dawson how the great empires like Rome collapsed when they “became more and more a predatory state that lived by [war](#) and plunder, and exhausted her own strength with that of her [victims](#).”

Assessing human values today [Prof](#) Menampampil confessed, “we have failed in areas of thought, philosophy, politics, commerce and diplomacy,” and insisted “we can still learn from each other.”

CM Paul

Former HoD, Dept of Mass Communications at Assam Don Bosco University, Guwahati, C.M. Paul was editor of The Herald weekly in Kolkata and director of Don Bosco International News Agency (ANS) based in Rome. He did MA in Journalism & Mass Communication from FORDHAM University, New York.

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