APPENDIX - X

REQUEST FOR GRANTING EQUAL RIGHTS TO DALIT CHRISTIANS

To,

Dated: April 16, 2002

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Hon’ble Prime Minister of India

We are glad to know that the Government has decided to introduce constitution amendment bill for waving 50% ceiling on reservation quota of SC/ST categories, set by Supreme Court. This amendment will restore constitutional rights to SC/STs, excluding backlog vacancies from the current quota. The community which has been affected by judgements of Supreme Court, scraping reservation in different areas will be relieved.

While welcoming the act of Government to restore justice to SC/STs, we earnestly appeal to you, Hon’ble Prime Minister to redress the long pending demand of the Christian community for equal rights to Dalit Christians.

At the dawn of Independence and the adoption of the new Constitution of the Republic of India, pro-active legislation was enacted to empower the Dalits who had suffered from three millennia of subjugation and discrimination. This laudatory Constitutional provision was however communalised when through a Presidential order in 1950, the Rights and Privileges were limited only to Hindus. Later, it was amended twice to include the Sikhs and Buddhists. The Dalit Christians however are being still denied these privileges accorded to other citizens of their status in the Indian society.

This discrimination violates all norms of natural justice and is against the avowed principle of secular India. Successive governments gave assurances but failed to fulfil them. The Father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi and the architect of the Constitution, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, have unequivocally stated that a change in religion does not bring about any change in the social status of the former untouchable convert. They continue to suffer from the same social, economic and educational
infirmities. In fact the situation worsens for them as they are denied all facilities in
many areas which are given to their kin. Dalit Christians who are socially, economically
and educationally backward form 1% of total Indian population. Restoration of
reservation to Scheduled Caste converts to Christianity will not hinder the reservation
quota, enjoyed by SC/STs.

While rectifying the defects in the distribution of reservation by restoring
constitutional rights to SC/STs, we urge the Government to extend constitutional rights
to Christians of Scheduled Caste origin.
We assure you of our constant prayers

Sd/-
Archbishop Alan De Lastic
President CBCI,
Member National Integration Council

Sd/-
Bishop Karam Masih
Bishop of Delhi, CNI