

S A N Y A S A Journal of Consecrated Life

Politics of Exclusivity, Division and Intimidation

A Critical Response from the Consecrated Persons



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SANYASA

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SANYASA Journal of Consecrated Life

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EDITORIAL

India is changing. India is changing fast, very fast. Our traditional values are at stake. Secularism is being questioned even by the law-makers. Religious tolerance and religious freedom are challenged by a few narrowed-minded pseudo nationalists. Minorities are being threatened. Atrocities against the Dalits, adivasis and women are on the alarming rise. Mob-lynching and mob rule has become order of the day. Fringe runs amok and is on rampage. Sadly, India is becoming a dangerous country for the consecrated persons and ethnic minorities to live in.

One particular oppressive ideology wants to dominate the scene, alter the history, change the text books to suit their fascist philosophy, destroy all other views and beliefs and damage the fabric of this ancient beautiful country. Anyone who questions this suffocation and systematic destruction of Indian ethos are at the risk of being eliminated. Students, writers, social activists, religious and others holding dissenting views against the narrow fundamentalistic ideology are branded as anti-national and unpatriotic. There are paid media and journalists propagating and selling dangerous, exclusive, divisive and fascistic dogma and principles.

Well, at this situation, can we, the consecrated persons, called to be the light of the world, the salt of the world, the leaven of the world, called to establish God's kingdom here on earth, called to stand for the values of God's kingdom be silent? Be mere spectators? Where is the inclusiveness that Jesus spoke of? Can we the preachers of the Gospel, be mum, mute, tight-lipped at the display of exclusivity and discrimination that bring division and polarisation that are totally alien to the message of the Gospel? We cannot close our eyes and shut our ears. As radical followers of Jesus, we should emphatically defend and proclaim unity, tolerance and mutual acceptance in the midst of the diversities of faith, languages and cultures of our nation.

Well, in this backdrop, Sanyasa: Institute of Consecrated Life (SICL) celebrated Consecrated Week with three day seminar on the topic "Politics of Exclusivity, Division and Intimidation: A Critical Response from the Consecrated Persons" from 1st to 3rd February 2018. Altogether nine scholarly papers highlighting different aspects of the theme of the seminar were presented by eminent scholars.

As usual, the July-December issue of *Sanyasa – Journal of Consecrated Life* carries the papers presented during the seminar.

The first paper is by Rev. Dr. Jose Cristo Rey G. Parades, CMF, an eminent theologian and thinker from Madrid, Spain on the topic, “Political Theology – Political Pneumatology: the Key to Understand, Discern and Act in the Context of Religious Pluralities and Diversities”. He brings out his ideas in two parts: looking back the long journey of political theology and looking ahead. He also highlights the contribution of some prominent Asian theologians on political theology. He concludes with the conviction of the presence of the Spirit and its action in human beings to make the Church enter into social dialogue, in dialogue among faith and reason, inter-religious dialogue, inter-generational and inter-culture dialogue and all these in the context of genuine freedom.

The second paper is by Rev. Dr. Selvaraj Arulnathan, SJ on “A Contemporary Analysis of the Indian Scenario”. He emphasises on the diverse culture of India – its ethnicity, language, culture, religion, habits, etc. The co-existence of all these is the very nature of this land and any disturbance to this will affect the fiber and the fabric of the land. He also deals in detail the merits and demerits of New Economic Policy, the situation of minorities today and the responses of the consecrated persons. Unfortunately, the journal carries only the summary of his presentation.

Advocate Robin Christopher, a young well-known activist from Bangalore presents the third paper on the theme, “Indian Constitution: A Fundamental Source of Reference”. He begins explaining what Constitution is and goes on to highlight the immense contribution of Dr. Ambedkar in writing of Indian Constitution. Then, he speaks of the Preamble of the Constitution as the heart of the entire Constitution and explains the ideals namely justice, liberty, fraternity, dignity, unity and integrity.

The fourth paper is presented by Dr. Sr. Hilaria Soundari, a professor from Gandhigram Rural University, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu on the theme, “Globalization and Its Potential Effects on Rural India”. She elucidates what globalization is, the important trends of globalization, the various areas affected by globalization in rural India, the effects of globalization on the economy, etc. She concludes with the words of our father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, “Be the change you want to see in the world”.

The next paper is on “Politics of Majoritarianism: A Threat to Democracy” by Rev. Dr. Selvaraj Arulnathan, S.J. He begins his presentation contrasting majoritarianism with democracy. Then, he explains what religion is, the formation of Hinduism as a religion, two types of Hindus, nationalism, saffronization and alternative to Hindutva majoritarianism. Unfortunately, the journal carries only the summary of this presentation.

Then, the issue carries an article by Rev. Dr. Xavier Manavath, CMF on the theme, “Searching for the Foundational Wisdom in Religions: A Path towards Inclusivity and Acceptance”. He begins re-visioning the mystery of God from different angles. He also gives a thorough and systematic understanding of what religions are really. Then, he goes on explaining how religious faith traditions are naturally pluralism. He concludes saying that one needs to remain committed to one’s own religious faith tradition while being open and respectful to those different from his/her own.

Then we have two articles of Rev. S. Vincent Anesthasiar, CMF. In his first article on “Religion – Agents of Social Transformation”, the author explains the difference between Left wing and Right wing parties. Then, he goes on narrating some religious movements which had social transformation as its goal. He brings out clearly the social transformation brought out by the Catholic Church. He concludes his article proposing certain concrete ways by which the Church can be an agent of genuine social transformation in the future.

His second article is titled, “Promotion of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation for Nation Building”. The article begins with the bird-view of the present day Indian society with the special emphasis on schedule tribes (ST) and Dalits (SC). Then, the author explains the oppressive corporate-oriented economical policies of the present Government and the areas where our money should not reach. He also presents the present culture of consumerism and its impact on the environment. Global warming and geo-engineering are also vividly presently in the article. The article concludes with concrete action plan to the face the present socio, political and economic problems of India.

The last article is on “Dialogue and Reconciliation: Ways to Counter Religious Polarization” by Dr. A. Pusparajan. The final article beautifully sums up and concludes the general theme of this issue, “Politics of Exclusivity, Division and Intimidation: A Critical Response from the Consecrated Persons”. The response

cannot be articulated better than dialogue and reconciliation. The author begins clarifying the concept of dialogue and the key principles for genuine dialogue. In the next section, he explains how genuine dialogue can be a way to confront religious polarization. In the last part, he explains in detail the concept of reconciliation and presents it forcefully as another way to counter religious polarization.

Thus, the present issue of *Sanyasa – Journal of Consecrated Life* contains seven scholarly articles and two summaries analysing from different angles the main theme, “Politics of Exclusivity, Division and Intimidation: A Critical Response from the Consecrated Persons”. We thank immensely all the contributors for their intellectual commitment in creating a better society for everyone to live and let others live. I sincerely hope that you find these articles really inspiring and fascinating enhancing your religious dedication. Have an enjoyable reading!

M. Arul Jesu Robin, CMF
(Chief Editor)

POLITICAL THEOLOGY – POLITICAL PNEUMATOLOGY: THE KEY TO A NEW AWARENESS, DISCERNMENT AND ACTION IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS PLURALITIES AND DIVERSITIES

José Cristo Rey García Paredes, CMF

I am presenting a paper on the theme “Political Theology – Political Pneumatology as a key of a new consciousness, discernment and action in the context of religious pluralities and diversities”. Given the policies of exclusion, what can we say as Christians, as followers of Jesus? Facing the dominating majorities, what should be the answers of religious minorities from the perspective of our faith, of the Gospel? What should be our attitude and mind, as religious and consecrated people?

I will try to offer an answer from the perspective of political Theology. “Political theology” could be defined as a discourse about God from the perspective of his Covenant with peoples, ethnicities, religions, cultures, societies, systems of organizations and leadership. From my perspective, this “political theology” is — at the same time — Trinitarian: “political Christology”, “political Pneumatology”. Theology as a discourse about God — revealed in the historical Jesus — and now manifested in the mysterious and marvelous mission of the Holy Spirit.

I would like to present this paper on political theology in a new context: the religious pluralism, the new political movements, the new paradigm in the Ecozoic Era. I hope that this reflection will help us to rediscover the meaning of our mission, as a modest collaboration with the mission of God (*Missio Dei*), with the *Missio* of the Holy Spirit.

My paper will be divided into two parts:

- Looking back: The long Journey of the “political Theology”
- Looking ahead: Political Pneumatology – the key of a new awareness, discernment and Action in the context of religious pluralities and diversities.

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I. THE PAST: THE LONG JOURNEY OF THE “POLITICAL THEOLOGY”

There was a time immediately after the Second Vatican Council, in which theology was restless; it was looking for new ways of answering the main challenges of society in that times, especially the humanist Marxism and the cultural revolution of 68 in France. The answer assumed the form of various theological attempts: perhaps the two most qualified attempts have been the “political theology” of Johann Baptist Metz¹ and the “theology of Hope” of Jürgen Moltmann. In Spain, Alfredo Fierro wrote at that time a very famous book titled *La fe contra el sistema. Estudios de teología política* (“Faith against system: Studies of political Theology”²). But, political theology has a long history.

1. Biblical Inspiration: Old and New Testament

A vision of God — involved in politics of society — already emerges in the Old Testament.” The books of the Pentateuch present us God as the one forming his people, freeing him from the politics of the Pharaoh of Egypt and leading his beloved people towards the land of freedom, the Promise Land.

The Exodus is the manifestation of that liberating and organizing action of God. The passage from theocracy to monarchy comes under the action of God, through his prophet Samuel. The people of God were guided by Kings; they have to obey the will of God; it was guided also by priests who lead the celebration of the Covenant, by prophets who constantly denounce the failures, the idolatries, and mark the lines of obedience to the Covenant. These prophets of Israel were not only bearers of a religious message, but also a political one. Social and the apocalyptic prophets denounced the monstrosity of the empires and those governing them. The prophetic apocalyptic received the shape of a real political theology.

When Jesus came, he proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of God. When Herod came to know that a baby was born in Bethlehem, who would be the Messiah, Herod reacted with cruel and bloody killing of infants at Bethlehem. Political reactions arouse the proclamation of the Kingdom of God by Jesus. That Kingdom was addressed, first of all, to the poor, the excluded, the discarded. The message provoked violent reactions in those who led both civil and religious politics in Israel. Jesus become a victim of injustice and perverse power. The kingdom of God is not the kingdom of the Roman empire, or the politics of the Jews.

2. **The First Millennium: Theologies for the difficult coexistence between the Church and the Empires**

Therefore, the big question put to the Church from its very beginning was: how to understand the relationship between God and theology and politics.

a) *The Three Theologies: Mythical, Natural and Political: Panaetius of Rhodes (185-100 B.C), Marc Terence Varro (116-27 B.C)*

Saint Augustine in his work *The City of God* reminds us that already in ancient Greco-Roman and pre-Christian Antiquity two authors as Panaetius of Rhodes (185-110)³ and Marc Terence Varro (116-27 B.C)⁴ subdivided theology into mythical theology, natural theology, and *political theology*⁵. The last one was a theology at the service of imperial power: the doctrine of the gods and their cult, according to which the social and political structures of Empire were considered sacred⁶. The Latin name of this kind of theology was “civil theology”.

So speaking of political theology, they identified the structure of the Roman Empire with a great sacred structure. It is not strange to consider the emperor as a deity, the divine Caesar and the structures of the empire as sacred realities.

Nevertheless Saint Augustine defended the politics of the City of God, that is not identified with any kingdom or Empire on this earth.

The historical tensions between the Church and the Roman Empire and after these, the tensions between the Church and other Empires (Carolingian Empire, Germanic Empire, etc.) manifest how difficult was the balance of Emperor’s politics and religion.

b) *Throne and Altar Alliances*

Throughout the history of the Church, political theology has emerged in one or another form.

When we talk about politics, some concepts like state⁷, human rights, equality, constitutional order, sovereignty, nation prevail.

When we speak about Theology, the main concepts that appear in the foreground are: Trinity, creation, Christology, reconciliation, Holy Spirit, Church and eschatology, apocalyptic. *Political theology* arises from the encounter of all these concepts in order to promote and make possible the dream of a new humanity.

The Political Theology has been very useful as foundation of alliances between throne and altar, cross and sword. The political Theology justified the theocracies

and all kind of caesaropapism⁸. The experience was that religious unity favored political unity and vice versa.

c) *Lutheran Reformation*

In the Lutheran Reform's time another problem arose. The reason was in that time the very difficult coexistence between Catholics and Protestants. It was often source of conflicts and of wars. In the Settlement of Augsburg, it was established the following statement: *cuius region eius et religio*.

The Lutheran Reformation deconfigured the political map of Europe. Religious-political conflicts arose between different Christian confessions. The Peace of Augsburg or Augsburg Settlement (1555) was obtained by this statement or principle: *Cuius regio, eius et religio* ("whose realm, his religion")⁹: in each territory, only one religion! The sovereign had the power to impose it. The principle *Cuius regio, eius religio* ("whose realm, his religion") allowed the princes of states — inside the Holy Roman Empire — to adopt either Lutheranism or Catholicism within the domains they controlled, ultimately reaffirming their sovereignty over those domains. Subjects, citizens, or residents who did not wish to conform to the prince's choice were given a grace period in which they were free to emigrate to different regions in which their desired religion had been accepted.

The society of that time was not mature enough to accept religious and confessional diversities in its territories. Religion was too close to politics.

d) *The Enlightenment: Separation Church and State, Theology and Politics*

Later, the movement of the Enlightenment struggled to separate Church and State, faith and human reason, theology and philosophy. Kant said that an "enlightened" person is the one who has the freedom to make public use of his or her reason in every circumstance and in all the dimensions of life. The political society had to be organized totally in a new way: as a system of freedom. For that, was necessary a society emancipated from religions and its Dogmas, Morals and Precepts. Obviously, the separation between Church and state, theology and politics was defended. And to a certain extent, reason was deified and was regarded as sacred.

As reaction, the opposite movement arose — in the nineteenth-century — the Traditionalism. This movement justified the counter-revolution with theological categories. It defended that the institution of the monarchy was a right that only God had reserved for himself; God never leaves the people to choose their leaders. Only God institutes them¹⁰. For that traditionalism defended the supremacy of religion and of religious institutions over the politics.

The Enlightenment, nevertheless, led to a politicization of faith, of theology: the Traditionalism to a sacralization of politics. Nothing strange then, that some famous political scientist like Hans Meier asked himself: “is it possible to speak correctly of *political theology*, that means, with all the meaning of this expression?”¹¹.

3. Rebirth of Political Theology in the 20th Century

a) *Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) and the Counter-argument of Erik Peterson (1890-1960)*

Already in the twentieth century a German jurist and political philosopher Karl Schmitt (1888-1985) made the revival of the old concept of “political theology” in his work was published in 1922 “Political theology: four chapters of the concept of sovereignty”¹².

In his book Schmitt stated and defended that “all in politics is related to the theology” and that “the main concepts of modern politics are theological, but secularized: that means, that the same concepts were previously applied to God”. In this way Schmitt tried to demonstrate that Christianity is the matrix of modern political concepts. Schmitt, nevertheless was more interested in politics than in theology. His intellectual commitment led him to support Nazism; one of his followers, H. Hirt, described Schmitt’s political theology as: “the support of political decisions or structures of State with theological categories of thought and the justification of his demands to power and dominion”¹³.

A lay theologian of Protestant origin but converted to Catholicism, Erik Peterson (1890-1960) was adamantly opposed to this vision of Schmitt. In his book “Monotheism: a political problem” Peterson proved that the politics can easily instrumentalize theology in order to justify absolutism and totalitarianism. Instead he proposed a theology free from politics: “for the Christian people the highest political activity is to believe in the Holy Trinity”¹⁴. In his book *Le livre des anges* (*The Book of Angels*) Peterson presented the Liturgy as “a political activity”¹⁵.

The appalling experience of Nazism led many thinkers to totally oppose any form of theology of politics (Josef Pieper, Josef Ratzinger).

b) *The New Political Theology after the Second World War: J.B. Metz*

After the Second World War the “political theology” has changed; almost a Copernican turn. The German theologian — student with Karl Rahner — Johan Baptist Metz defended in the late 60’s the need for a new “political theology”¹⁶.

Theology is a discourse on *God in Covenant with the human being*. The will of God is a humanity in state of “adulthood”, liberated, free, critical against injustices and errors. He is the God of Exodus, the God of whom Jesus proclaimed his Kingdom. He is the God of the Promise of a new world¹⁷, of a future for the whole humanity.

Although there is now salvation and light — mixed with perdition and darkness —, in the future all ambiguity will disappear: there will be only salvation. This is guaranteed by the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ¹⁸. The future that God promises us is “new”, transcends all our possibilities¹⁹. This future is the key to properly “understanding” history, and to “acting” - “the truth that must be done”²⁰. We will be transformed as human beings into the Kingdom of God²¹. The salvation proclaimed by Jesus is permanently related to the world in its socio-political consequences. The eschatological future that Jesus promised is not an empty horizon, but a critical imperative that frees us from the present time: “every eschatological theology has to become a political theology, as a critical theology of society”²².

Consequence of all these, is that theology — the discourse on God — must become in the Church “political theology”. That is to say, a theology that has to speak in public and that, on the other hand, has to respond to the concrete situations in which humanity finds itself, which is becoming more adult²³.

It should not be a theology at the service of the instances of power, because the kingdom of God is not identified with any of the existing forms of power. And if it is not identified, that means the current political forms of power must be relativized, not sacralized. But it also requires a new consciousness and an ethic of change (*Veränderungsethik*)²⁴.

The Church must not enthrone itself, nor self-affirm, but proclaim its eschatological provisional nature. She, moved by love in its social and universal dimension, will show an absolute decision in favor of justice, freedom and peace²⁵. The Church will proclaim that the future is not the result of a political project just like that, but the ultimate action of God in favor of the human being.

The Latin American theology of liberation emerged in 1971 with the famous work of Gustavo Gutiérrez’s *Liberation Theology*. A year earlier, Joseph Comblin’s *Theology of the Revolution* had appeared.

II. THE PRESENT: POLITICAL THEOLOGIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

a) *Paul Kahn: Secularized Theological Concepts*

The process of political theology did not stop in the 70s. In the 21st century, a professor from Yale University — Paul Kahn — resumed the political theology of Carl Schmitt. The title of his book was exactly the same “Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty”. He defended the thesis that “all significant concepts of modern state theory are secularized-theological concepts”. That is to say, that political concepts have a theological origin. Therefore, it is not true that there has been a separation between politics and religion — as the philosophers of the Enlightenment proposed. Even the liberal political order has its theology²⁶.

According to Paul Kahn the modern nation-state is occupying the space of “the sacred”. We need a political theology that explores the sources and nature of political life: sacrifice for the nation, shed blood, until the last sacrifice, give everything for the country, respect for the Constitution, etc. What we find here, are secularized theological concepts.

b) *William Cavanaugh: The Idolatrous Path*

In this same line is situated the American theologian William Cavanaugh: “My thesis is that the modern political theory, supposedly “secular” and neutral is in reality, a masked theology, which makes the modern state a savior-state, instead of the Church”²⁷.

William Cavanaugh contends that a full theological understanding of the Church requires us to refuse the political marginalization of the Church. Any adequate ecclesiology must acknowledge the political implications of two crucial theological data: first, there is no separate history of politics apart from the history of salvation; and second, the Church is indispensable to the history of salvation.

To resist violence, the Church must come out of its privacy and rediscover an independent political discourse; but not in order to recover political power by means of coercion, but in order to denounce this violence. As the Body of Christ, the Church must be conceived as a public body, as an alternative and autonomous social space. It is a public body for its liturgical practices, its works of mercy, its power to bind and loosen, the exercise of episcopal authority, its own Canon Laws. For Cavanaugh the politics of the modern age is not so much twilight of the Gods, but an idolatrous path. It gives many revenues contemplating the state in theological terms. The state is seen as a kind of savior, of *deus ex machina*, which has to be

invoked where crisis attacks. But what can be expected from the powers and powers of this world? Cavanaugh proposes a very interesting re-structuring of the Church: “local political spaces, connected translocally”. Make politically valid and useful what already happens in the Eucharistic life.

c) “Radical Orthodoxy”: Truth and Ambiguity

Characteristics of “political theology” also has the current of thought of Cambridge called “Radical Orthodoxy”. The main exponent of it is John Milbank: “From now on only a liturgical politics can save us from the violence of liberalism”.

In 1999 a book-program of three hundred pages appeared: “Radical Orthodoxy: a new theology”: it was a call to think beyond secular reason, to think in terms of Trinity, Christology, Church and Eucharist, to think the reality from the theological truth. It is a question of returning to contemplate all these realities from a Christian point of view, that is, Trinitarian, Christological, ecclesial and Eucharistic.

Humanity must worship its Creator, its Redeemer. A true Christian order is a liturgical order. A truly Christian civilization is imbued with rites and rituals. “Give us rites!” Shouted the poet Rilke. The liturgy is not a Sunday pastime: it is the human activity par excellence.

The power of faith relaunches us to ecumenism, not ecumenism of minimums, but of maximums.

The contribution of the “Radical Orthodoxy” to the renewal of political theology is inscribed in the conviction that participation in God necessarily implies a social participation in the earthly fields²⁸. “The Christianity that wants to renew the individual human being, the inner human being, also has the task of renewing the same human community.” “The Church itself must be the initial seat of that renewed community.” “Theology must be political if it wants to be evangelical.”

d) Political Theologies in Asia: Aloysius Pieris

Asian Christianity has registered two species of *political theologies*: the “theology of domination” (from the 1500s onwards)²⁹ and various “theologies of liberation” (from 1970s onwards). The *Asian political theology* can be described as:

a species of theology which originates, develops, and culminates in a political option made by an Asian Christian community as a biblically inspired response to a social conflict or a social need affecting both the Church and the larger (non-Christian) community around it³⁰.

This Asian political theology could also be called *Asian Third World Theology*. “Third” world was not understood as a number three³¹, but as *an alternative world* to which the decolonized nations of the 1950s and 1960s aspired (*tiers monde*): a *tertium genus*: neither capitalist, nor socialist³². Nevertheless, this world is numerically “two-thirds world.” The Non-Aligned Movement was the most expressive political symbol of this new awareness in the seventies. In 1976, in Dar es Salaam, arose the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians. The Asian version of third world theology began to identify itself as “Asian liberation theology”.

Poverty and Religiousness

Two ideas, *poverty and religiousness*, began to dominate the theological scene:

“*Poverty*” was considered an imposed poverty on the masses by the greed of the wealth; this poverty is an anti-evangelical phenomenon, a counter-sign of God’s reign. Another one is poverty voluntarily embraced: it is the beatitudinal state of Christian discipleship that corresponds to the liberative ascesis of all other Asian religions.

Religiousness was seen as either enslaving or liberating accordingly as the different religions sanction or not an unjust social order. The Asian religions that inculcate liberation from personal greed, and the tools of social analysis or class analysis which denounces the mechanism of institutionalized greed (capitalism) are both employed in conjunction with each other as a strategy for a liberative praxis.

The Cosmic Dimension

Asian Theologies of Liberations have revalued positively the *cosmic*³³ *religions*³⁴. According to these religions the powers of nature or cosmic forces manifest and maintain the vital needs of humans. Humans are participant members of this cosmic community rather than its owners or controllers. These powers of nature (fire, wind, water) are not “exploited” but reverently relied upon and ritually tamed in favor of human welfare. The technocracy — with its desacralizing effects on the eco-community — is damaging to cosmic religiosity. All forces of nature are invoked and revered as personal divine beings collaborating with humans; they are not impersonal instruments in human hands³⁵.

Note the difference between the “cosmic” and the “secular.” Though both are a positive affirmation of the present world, the secular defines itself as the nonsacred, whereas the cosmic points to a sacred this-worldliness. Now, being sacred, the cosmos inspires an ecospirituality invoking the “sacramental” theory of creation

and clashes with technocracy, i.e. technology vitiated by an “instrumental” theory of creation. Hence, as a religious phenomenon with a revolutionary potential, the cosmic has become an indispensable ingredient of an Asian liberation theology³⁶.

Thus an Asian liberation theology is neither Asian nor liberative unless it integrates the personal/spiritual, the social/political, and the cosmic/ ecological dimensions of Asia’s various soteriologies.

c) *Covenant Christology*

The Asian paradigm of Christology has been dramatically shifting away from the Chalcedonian model. For the Christological councils of the Church neglected *the political dimension* of the historically recorded assassination of Jesus under Pontius Pilate and concentrated unduly on the philosophical problem of reconciling humanity with divinity in the mystery of the Incarnation. The Incarnation has to be interpreted in the light of the life, work, words, and especially the victorious death of Jesus; victorious, because the cross is not merely the locus of his Pascal Mystery (death, resurrection and ascension and of Pentecost). The cross, in the language of liberation, is the political conflict in which God vanquishes Mammon, love defeats power, life rises from death, and the victim turns victor. It is the symbol of the good news of liberation, of which the main addressees and the sole announcers are today’s victims of political conflicts. A political theology has to hold together the two baptisms of Jesus: first at the “Jordan of Asian religiosity” (choosing discipleship, prophetic stream of liberative religiosity), and second on the “Calvary of Asian poverty” (as a victim of a political conspiracy between the imperial colonizer and the local exploiters of the religious-minded masses). Such a Christ does not compete with the founders of other religions but cross-fertilizes Asian religiosity with the politics of poverty as no other teacher has done.

The theology of domination has to be replaced by a theology of liberation which is founded on the Covenant. As the new covenant made flesh, Jesus put his disciples in touch with both partners of the covenant. Jesus is the one in whom “God and the victims of injustice” are encountered as one undividedly salvific (i.e. covenanted) reality. The “person” of Jesus is a corporate person in so far as he incorporates the poor as his own body. For Asian liberation theologians, to confess “Jesus is the Lord” is to proclaim in word and deed that “Jesus is the new covenant.” (1) Jesus is the irrevocable antinomy between God and Mammon (love of God); and (2) Jesus is the irrevocable defense pact between God and the poor (love of neighbor).

Other Asian Perspectives

Asian political theologies have received different faces according to different countries and contexts.

“Theology of struggle” (Filipino theologians); “Contextual social theology” (Indonesian model); Theologians of the Patriotic Association and the Three Self Movement in China seem to view “liberation” not as a goal to be achieved but as a given fact among their people, which the Church was called to participate in and appropriate judiciously in its indigenous, i.e. Chinese, similar manifestation in Vietnam; the North Korean equivalent of this tendency is noticed in those Christians who collaborate with the Juche philosophers (“Minjung theology”); the Palestinian Christians, too, have striven to evolve an “ecumenical liberation theology movement”, which they call *sabeel* (Arabic for “the way”, and also “channel”, or “spring” of “living water”) and which advocates a non-violent struggle for peace and justice, founded on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, “the Corner Stone” is the name of the journal that promotes it)³⁷.

II. THE FUTURE: POLITICAL PNEUMATOLOGY – THE KEY OF A NEW AWARENESS, DISCERNMENT AND ACTION IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS PLURALITIES AND DIVERSITIES

1. The Politics of our Trinitarian God: “Missio Dei”

Theology is characterized by a discourse or reflection on God. God is not a substantive, He is a verb. God is *perichóresis*, dance, action. God is always acting in favor of his creation. And, above all, in favor of the humanity that He has created at His image and likeness. God is not indifferent to the happenings of his sons and daughters and creatures. God wanted — from the very beginning — to establish a definitive Covenant with humanity. He has espoused humanity “forever” in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, nothing happening to us is indifferent to him. Our God and our Risen Lord Jesus and our Holy Spirit — sent to us by the Father and the Son — are provident. God knows and sees what happens in our world in this historical moment. Our Trinitarian God is aware of the movements of evil, of sin in our societies. The compassionate God is not indifferent to all that disturb the peace of the earth, the happiness and dignity of human beings. Our God does not tolerate exclusions, wars, robbery, violence, destruction of nature...

Jesus was the initiator of a definitive exodus towards freedom, truth, justice, peace. We are in context of the reign of God and theology wants to become aware of it.

The current Church in *Evangelii Gaudium* tells us that in our mission, participation in the mission of the Spirit, we must not forget the social and political dimension.

2. Towards a Political Pneumatology

In this historical journey through political theology, we perceive a certain air of crusade, of mutual exclusions. There are no mutual recognitions. The climate of dialogue, of mutual understanding, is lacking. What we might call “the inter-” (inter-politics, inter-theology). The reason for this great separation is — at least on the part of the Christian faith — the oversight of Pneumatology, of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. For that reason, I appeal in this second part to what I call “Political Pneumatology”, of which a small group of thinkers is increasingly aware³⁸.

a) *Restart by the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Karl Barth)*

Both in Protestantism and in Catholicism the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been reduced to “the field of the privacy”; the spiritual life has almost always been connected with interiority, with the intimacy. Nothing strange then, if the references to the Holy Spirit in most political theologies are so scarce and almost absent³⁹.

Karl Barth — after devoting many volumes to his Dogmatics — did not elaborate a systematic treatise on the Spirit⁴⁰. A little before his death in 1968 he said that if he had to start over again his Dogmatic, he would take the Pneumatology as a starting point⁴¹. Paul VI asked that a theology of the Spirit must be elaborated as an indispensable complement to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council⁴². In fact, so did a number of eminent theologians⁴³.

b) *Creation's Pneumatology*

And why a discourse on the Holy Spirit in a political key? Our God is not a Trinity enclosed in the deity. The Bible, the Liturgy tells us about the Trinity in history. The Spirit now carries forward the *missio Dei*; the Holy Spirit brings to fulfillment in history the mission of the Creator Father and the Son, Jesus. The Holy Spirit is Great connection between the Father-Creator and the Son-Redeemer with humanity in its religious, moral, political and social life.

Origen — considered Father of the Eastern Church — wrote this fantastic sentence: “the days of Pentecost are everyday happening”⁴⁴. Let’s notice the plural! After the *theologia crucis* comes the *theologia spiritus*⁴⁵. The Eastern Fathers had the conviction that the goal of the Incarnation of the Son of God was to make possible the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on humanity⁴⁶.

When we look at the Holy Spirit from the perspective of its relationship with creation and with the whole cosmic process, then it is easy to discover the relationships between the Spirit and the nature, with the Spirit and the moral, cultural and political life of human beings; in that sense, pneumatology and anthropology are very close and interconnected. The Judeo-Christian and Syriac tradition (not the Greek one!⁴⁷) — the closest to Jesus — did not speak of the Spirit in concepts, but in images, in figures. In Jewish-Christian authors, such as Aphrahat and Ephrem, we find a real Semitic pneumatology⁴⁸. For both of them, the main characteristic of Jesus Christ -the first Adam- is to be the One who has received the anointing of the Spirit in its fullness. Also, the second Adam (that of the paradise), was created according to the image of Jesus Christ, and he received the breath of the Spirit. The Spirit belongs constitutively to human beings. But, according to Aphrahat the descendants of the second Adam lost the Spirit. Full humanness is restored when the Spirit is received again. This happens, according to him, in Baptism⁴⁹.

The theology of the Creator Spirit leads us to discover its presence not only in the believing community, but also in all human beings, and even so in the energies of nature. The great theologian Paul Tillich made Pneumatology the correlation tie between culture, religion, philosophy and theology. That meant for him the “I believe in the Holy Spirit”⁵⁰.

c) The Spirit fills the Earth – Acts Everywhere

The Holy Spirit fills the earth. Therefore, we have neither in religion nor in the Church, the monopoly of the Spirit. The Spirit can act in the most secular political movements, in the different religions, in the different cultures. Religion and Politics are not two contrasting domains. The important thing is that both are open to the action of the Spirit. The Spirit creates tensions, but also harmonies. It is the wind that we do not know where it comes from or where it is going. Ecstasy occurs when there is a mutual immanence between the Spirit of God and the human spirit, which embraces its morality, its culture and its religion.

If in the past the gifts of the Spirit were understood in a very sacred way and because of that they became captives of interiority and of “mystical theology” and reserved for a few privileged people, now we understand that the charisms of the Spirit can be found in the secular field⁵¹. Instead of something peripheral and decorative the charisms of the Spirit are increasingly conceived as belonging to the structure of the Church, of society and not to their extraordinary, but ordinary life⁵².

Political Pneumatology finds its main inspiration in the book of Revelation, in the Christian apocalyptic. There the Spirit has the great protagonism: he writes to the seven Churches; the Spirit accomplishes the victory of Christ over nature and over history. The Spirit is confronted against the evil spirits that bestialize the earth. At the light of the apocalyptic the whole prophecy of the Old Testament is a longing for a different policy, for a different Leadership. The Christian apocalyptic also warns the Church of its limits and sins.

3. Auspicious Ecclesial Moment: Impulses from “*Evangelii Gaudium*”

In the Catholic Church we are now in a moment of special sensitivity towards political Pneumatology, although this expression is not used. The apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium* is very sensitive to the protagonism of the Holy Spirit when it comes to understand the new evangelization, the politics.

The last chapter of the exhortation tells us what the evangelizers receive from the Holy Spirit: “The Holy Spirit also grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (*parrhesía*) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition” (EG, 259).

Some of the most important affirmations about the spirituality of the evangelizers go in the line of the political Pneumatology:

“Mystical proposals without a solid social and missionary outreach are of no help to evangelization, nor are dissertations or social or pastoral practices which lack a spirituality which can change hearts... Even so, “we must reject the temptation to offer a privatized and individualistic spirituality which ill accords with the demands of charity, to say nothing of the implications of the incarnation” (EG 262).

“Yet Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others... Whenever we do so, our lives become wonderfully complicated and we experience intensely what it is to be a people, to be part of a people” (EG 270).

“The resurrection of Christ introduces germs of the new world everywhere. The person in mission “believes it”, “is entrusted to the Holy Spirit” (EG 279-280).

The fourth chapter of the *Evangelii Gaudium* talks about the social dimension of evangelization. It is really a writing of political-practical theology. There it is said that our confession of faith in the Holy Trinity lead us to recognize the dignity of the human being, image and likeness of God and with whom our God has established an everlasting Covenant (EG 177). This conviction has consequences:

- The evangelization is intimately connected with human promotion, with fraternity, with justice, with peace (*EG* 178-181) and not with a mere “charity à la carte”.
- The social teaching of the Church is an exercise in practical political theology. Furthermore, “the option for the poor is for us a theological category”: letting oneself be mobilized by the Spirit “in loving attention towards the poor” (*EG* 199).
- This conviction leads us:
 - to fight against the absolute autonomy of markets, speculation (*EG* 202),
 - to fight against comfortable indifference (*EG* 203), and mere assistance (“remedy-poison”) (*EG* 204);
 - to recognize the highest political vocation and ask politicians to open themselves to God and collaborate with Him (*EG* 205).
 - to take care of the common house or economy (*EG* 206)
 - to take care of the most fragile of the earth and to invest in them (*EG* 209): the homeless, toxic-dependent, refugees, indigenous, elderly, migrants, trafficking in persons, women in exclusion, unborn children and abortions (*EG* 213),
 - to take care of nature (*EG* 215-216).

The conviction of the presence of the Spirit and its action in human beings make the Church feel also called to enter into social dialogue, in dialogue among faith and reason, inter-religious dialogue, intergenerational and intercultural dialogue; and all this in a context of freedom.

We are at a privileged moment, in which we can discover the political dimension of the *Missio Spiritus*. Each one of the believers from the gift he has received. The utopia is born again.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that this “political theology” had a long history: past, present and future.

- The past manifested the difficulty of combining religious and political power and the oscillation among them. During the Sacred Empires the danger was the confusion. During the Enlightenment the danger was the total separation: politics in the field of public, religion in the field of privacy.

- The present manifests another situation: it seems that politics has assumed the characteristics of religion. Politics are using theological categories but secularized.
- The future looks for a new theoretical and practical synthesis: the perspective is the *Missio Dei* through the Spirit (Political Pneumatology), the Theology of Creation, the ethics of inclusiveness and cosmic perspective.

Endnotes

¹ Cf. R. HÖRL, ed., *Die Politik und das Heil*, Mainz 1968; A. LANGNER, *Die politische Gemeinschaft. Kommentare zur Pastoralkonstitution*, Köln 1968; JOHAN BAPTIST METZ, *Zur Theologie der Welt*, Mainz-München, 1968; ID., *Politische Theologie*, en “Sacramentum Mundi” III, 1232-1240; ID., *Kirche im Prozess der Aufklärung*, München 1970; JÜRGEN MOLTMANN, *Existenzgeschichte und Weltgeschichte. Auf dem Wege zu einr politischen Hermeneutik des Evangeliums*, en *Perspektiven der Theologie*, Mains-München, 1968, 128-146; H. PEUKERT, ed., *Diskussion zur “politischen Theologie”*, München 1969.

² Cf. A. FIERRO, *La fe contra el sistema. Estudios de teología política*, Estela, 1972; M. USEROS, *Cristianos en la vida política*, Salamanca 1971.

³ Panaetius distinguished three theologies: a poetic, or mythological; another physical, philosophical or rational; and another civil, or political. The first has to be rejected because poets have attributed to the god’s actions that would be unworthy in a good man. The second is true, but it is not accessible to the majority of human beings. The third, constituted by the rites and cults accepted in the cities, must be conserved and respected for its importance to maintain order and civil peace.

⁴ Marc Terence Varro made this subdivision of Theology in his book *Antiquitates*, that we know only by the references of Saint Agustin. Probably Varro gave a real theological dimension to the politics of Empire: Cf. H. DAHLMANN, *Terentius Varro*, en “Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft”, VI, 12: PL, 41, 192; cf. ID., o.c., VI, 5: PL 41, 180-182; cf. G. SÖHNGEN, *Natürliche Theologie*, en “Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche”, VII, 812.

⁵ San Agustín se refirió a ellas en su “De Civitate Dei”: “Tres Theologias, quas Graeci dicunt mythicen, physicen, politicen, latine autem dici possunt fabulosa, naturalis, civilis”: SAINT AUGUSTIN, *De Civitate Dei*, VI, 12: PL 41, 192; ID., o.c., VI, 5: PL 41, 180-182.

⁶ Cf. H.A. DEAN, *The political and social ideas of St. Augustin*, New York 1966; A.A.T. EHRHARDT, *Politische Metaphysik von Solon bis Augustin*, I-III, Tübingen 1959-1969; D. RITSCHL, *Die Last des augustinischen Erbes*, en “Parrhesia (Festschrift Karl Barth)”, Zürich 1966, 471-490; H.X. ARQUILLIERE, *L’agustinisme politique*, Paris 1934; J. OROZ DE LA CONSOLACIÓN, *Introducción a una “Theologia” agustino-varroniana, vista desde la “Ciudad de Dios”*, in “Estudios sobre la Ciudad de Dios”, “Ciudad de Dios” 167 (1954), 459-473.

⁷ The historian Émile Poulat has pointed out the absence of the word “state” in the texts of the II Vati-can Council. This gap reveals that the analysis of the modern world made by the Council’s Fathers was really insufficient. It is the proof of an instinctive resistance of Catholic theology to a concept that is traditionally strange to it: cf. WILLIAM T. CAVANAUGH, “Killing for the Telephone Company: why the Nation-State is not the Keeper of the Common Good”, in *Modern Theology* 20 (2004) 243,274.

⁸ System in which the temporal ruler extends his own power to ecclesiastical and theological matters. Such emperors appointed bishops and the Eastern Patriarch, directed the development of liturgical practices, and even aided the recruitment of monks.

⁹ The Peace established the principle *Cuius regio, eius religio* (“whose realm, his religion”), which allowed the princes of states within the Holy Roman Empire to adopt either Lutheranism or Catholicism within the domains they controlled, ultimately reaffirming their sovereignty over those domains. Subjects, citizens, or residents who did not wish to conform to the prince’s choice were given a grace period in which they were free to emigrate to different regions in which their desired religion had been accepted. Cf. J. LECLER, *L’origine et le sens de la formule “cuius regio illius religio”*, en “Revue Sciences Religieuses” 38 (1951) 119-131. La expresión no se encuentra en la Paz Agustana sino varios años después en 1599, en las *Institutiones Iuris Canonici* del canonista luterano J. Stephani: cf. RENÉ COSTE, *Théologie de la liberté religieuse*, Paris 1969, 120-123.

¹⁰ The main representatives of this political Traditionalism were: cf. J.M. DE MAISTRE, *Du Pape*, Lyon 1819; L. DE BONALD, *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux*, Constante 1986; F.R. CHATEAUBRIAND, *Le génie du Christianisme*, Paris 1802. Ernst Feil formulated this sharp question: Why traditionalists theologians and politicians rejected revolution? As a consequence of their “political theology”, or better, they built a “political theology” to legitimize their rejection of the revolutionary movement?

¹¹ The German politologist Hans Maier was contrary as much to the classical concept of “political Theology”, as to Metz’s proposal of a new political theology: HANS MAIER, *Politische Theologie?*, en DPTTh, 1-25; for some other thinkers the so-called “political theology” was better described as “political ethics”: T. RENDTORFF, *Politische Ethik oder “politische Theologie?”*, en DPTTh, 217-230; G. ERMECKE, “*Politische Theologie*” im Licht einer realistischen Sozialtheologie, en ThGL 59 (1969) 282-296; W. PANNENBERG, *Geschichtstatsachen und christliche Ethik*, en “Evangelische Kommentar” 1 (1968) 688-699.

¹² Cf. CARL SCHMITT, *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, München-Leipzig, 1922; English translation: *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, Chicago 2005.

¹³ “Mit theologischen Denkkategorien politische Entscheidungen oder staatliche Formen zu unterstützen und ihrem Herrschaftsanspruch zu rechtfertigen” H. HIRT, *Monotheismus als politischen Problem?*, en “Hochland” 35 (1937-1938) 325.

¹⁴ ERIK PETERSON – DIDIER RANCE, *Témoin de la vérité*, Ad Solem, Génève 2007, Preliminar.

¹⁵ “Los ángeles en el culto de la Iglesia expresan el hecho de que dicho culto es un culto oficial que se rinde a Dios y, puesto que los ángeles tienen una relación con el mundo político-religioso del cielo, el culto de la Iglesia entra también por ellos en una relación necesaria con el ámbito político”: ERIK PETERSON, *Le livre des anges*, Ad Solem, Génève 1996.

¹⁶ Cf. J.B. METZ, *Die Stunde Christi. Eine geschichtstheologische Erwägung*, en “Wort und Wahrheit” 12 (1957) 5-18; ID., *Theologische and metaphysische Ordnung*, en ZkTh 83 (1961) 1-14; ID., *Christliche Anthropozetrik*, München 1962; ID., art. Welt, en LThK X, 1021, 1026; ID., *Gott vor uns*, en “Ernst Bloch zu ehren, Frankfurt 1965, 227-241; ID., *Zur Theologie der Welt*, Mainz-München 1968, ID., *Politische Theologie*, en SM III, 1232-1240; ID., *Kirchliche Autorität im Ansruch der Freiheitsgeschichte*, en *Kirche im Prozess der Aufklärung*, München 1970, 53-90.

¹⁷ Cf. J.B. METZ, *Welt als Geschichte*, en zTHW, 467; ID., art. *Welt*, en LThK X, 1021-1026.

¹⁸ Cf. J.B. METZ, *Christliche Anthropozentrik*, 25.

¹⁹ Cf. J.B. METZ, *Christliche Anthropozentrik*, 112-113.

²⁰ Cf. ID., zTHW, 77-80.

²¹ Cf. ID. *Christliche Anthropozentrik*, 112.

²² J.B. METZ, zThW, 104-107.

²³ Cf. J.B. METZ, *Kirche und Welt im Lichte einer "Politischen Theologie"*, en sThW, 99.

²⁴ J.B. METZ, *Politische Theologie in der Diskussion*, en DPTh, 282.

²⁵ Cf. J.B. METZ, zTHW, 107-116; ID., *Kirche im Prozess der Aufklärung*, 53-90; ID., *Politische Theologie in der Diskussion*, en DPTh, 296-301.

²⁶ Cf. PAUL W. KAHN, *Political Theology: four new chapters on the concept of Sovereignty*, New York 2011.

²⁷ WILLIAM CAVANAUGH, *Imaginación teo-política: la liturgia como acto político en la época del consumismo global*, Nuevo Inicio, Granada 2007, 9; WILLIAM T. CAVANAUGH, *Migrations of the Holy, God, State and the Political meaning of the Church*, Grand Rapids-Cambridge 2011.

²⁸ JOHN HOWARD YODER, *The Politics of Jesus. Vicit Agnus Noster*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1994; ID., *The Priestly Kingdom*, Notre Dams 1984; JOHN H. YODER, *The Christian Witness to the State*, Waterloo 1977; OLIVER O'DONOVAN, *The Desire of the Nations – Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology*, Cambridge 1996.

²⁹ This theology was implicitly operative in the policy of Euro-ecclesiastical expansionism which resulted from the unholy alliance between Christian missions and Western colonialism.

³⁰ ALOISIUS PIERIS, *Political Theologies in Asia*, in PETER SCOTT – WILLIAM T. CAVANAUGH, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, Oxford 2004, 256.

³¹ Following the *first world* -capitalist countries-, *second world* - socialist bloc-.

³² It was true, however, that some liberation theologians leaned towards the socialist bloc as an inevitable consequence of their aversion to capitalism as a form of Mammon-worship (a fundamental axiom of this theology even today), though there certainly were among them many critical voices raised against the denial of civil liberties in communist regimes.

³³ The word "cosmic" is actually a neologism that gradually entered the vocabulary of theology to indicate the tribal and clannic cultures of Asia and Oceania, as well as the popular forms of the major world religions. These latter are known as "metacosmic" soteriologies: cf. ALOISIUS PIERIS, *a.c.*, 257.

³⁴ Pejoratively referred to as "animism" or "nature worship" by Western anthropologists, and rejected as "polytheism" and "idolatry" by early representatives of colonial Christianity

³⁵ The devas in the Indic region, the phis in Southeast Asia, the bons in Tibet are such cosmic powers interacting with humans. The cult of kamis in Japanese Shintoism and the ancestor worship in Chinese Confucianism are culturally refined and religiously exquisite forms of cosmic spirituality: cf. ALOISIUS PIERIS, *a.c.*, 258-259.

³⁶ ALOISIUS PIERIS, *a.c.*, 259.

³⁷ cf. ALOISIUS PIERIS, *a.c.*, 270 ff.

³⁸ The concept of “political pneumatology” is rooted in the dialectical process of secularization of the theology of history; which is well exemplified in the opposition between universalism and particularism, between Spirit and Letter: cf. F. GHIA, “In limine: percorsi di pneumatologia politica”, in *Politica e Religione* 2010/2011 (2011) 11-24. The political Pneumatology is an appropriated concept to prefigure the utopia of a reconciled human community, what translated in political terms could correspond to the old theological concept of “ecclesia invisibilis”; different authors have thought in this way: Joaquín de Fiore, Leibniz, Fichte, Hegel, Troeltsch, Taubes, and Voegelin and others: cf. MICHAEL S. NORTHCOTT, *A Political Theology of Climate Change*, 2013, 345; M. NICOLETTI, *Lo Spirito e il potere. Questioni di pneumatologia politica*, Morcelliana 2012; AUTORES VARIOS, *Spirit as manifest in the true interests and desires of a political community*, Stephen Chavura Macquarie University Macquarie Park, Australia 2013; Péter Losonczi, MIKA LUOMA-AHO – AAKASH SINGH, ed., *The Future of Political Theology: Religious and Theological Perspectives*, Burlington 2011, 206.

³⁹ HAROLD H. DITMANSON, “The Significance of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit for Contemporary Theology,” *The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church*, ed. Paul D. Opsahl, Augsburg, Minneapolis 1978, 206.

⁴⁰ S. DAECKE, “Neue Konjunktur für den Geist,” *Evangelische Kommentare*, 9(1975) 520.

⁴¹ The treatment of pneumatology is in the fourth volume, and this mainly in an ecclesiological context. Was he influenced here by Schleiermacher, with whom Barth had a love-hate relationship? There are passages on the Spirit in Barth’s other three volumes which should not be neglected.

⁴² Audiencia General del 6 de Junio de 1973: *Documentation Catholique*, no. 1635 (1973) 601.

⁴³ Cf. KILIAN MACDONELL, “The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit”, *Theology Today* 39 (1982) 142-161.

⁴⁴ *Contra Celsum*, 8; SC 150:224.

⁴⁵ WALTER BRÖCKER – HEINRICH BUHR, *Zur Theologie des Geistes*, Gunter Neske Verlag, Pfullingen 1960, 5.

⁴⁶ San Atanasio decía que “Dios se encarnó para poder traerles a los seres humanos el Espíritu”: De Incarnatione et Contra Arianos, VIII; PG 26:996c. Y san Ireneo decía que toda la economía de la salvación non es dada en el Espíritu: *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, nos. 5, 42, 49; SC 62:34-38; 98; 99; 109; 110. See also PAUL GALTIER, *Le Saint Esprit en nous d’après le Pères Grecs (Analecta Gregoriana, Series Theologica 35; Sectio A, no. 4)*, Gregorian, Rome, 1946, 42. Para Nicolás de Cabasillas toda la obra y enseñanza de Cristo no tuvo otro resultado que la efusión del Espíritu Santo sobre la Iglesia *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, 37:3, translated by J. M. Hussey – P. A. McNulty, SPCK, London, 1960, 90; JOHN MEYENDORFF, *Byzantine Theology*, Mowbrays, London, 1974, 171. Según la tradición mística rusa la meta de la vida cristiana consiste en adquirir la efusión del Espíritu Santo Paul Evdokimov, *L’orthodoxie*, Delachaux et Niestle, Neuchatel, 1959, 147; SERGIUS BOLSHAKOFF, *Russian Mystics* (Cistercian Studies Series, 26), Kalamazoo, 1977, 130, 131.

⁴⁷ Aramaic was one of the eminent languages of the civilized East from the sixth to the third century B.C. Even after the conquest of Alexander the Great, Aramaic, in one of its main dialects, Syriac, remained the chief spoken and written language of the people. So there is, alongside Greek and Latin Christianity, a Semitic form, which in its earliest expressions was independent of Paul's theology and Hellenic culture. Greek culture helped introduce non-Semitic elements into the New Testament.

⁴⁸ WINFRID CRAMER, *Der Geist Gottes und des Menschen in frühsyrischer Theologie*, Aschendorff, Münster, 1979. See also EMMANUEL-PATAQ SIMAN, *L'expérience de l'esprit par l'église d'après la tradition syrienne d'Antioche (Théologie Historique, 15)*, Beauchesne, Paris 1971; S. P. BROCK, *Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition (The Syrian Churches Series, 9)*, ed. J. Vellian, Poona, 1979.

⁴⁹ CRAMER, *Der Geist Gottes und des Menschen*, 73-76, 78.

⁵⁰ STURM WITTSCHIER, *Paul Tillich: Seine Pneuma-Theologie*, Glock und Lutz, Nürnberg, 1975, 10, 105.

⁵¹ ERNST KÄSEMANN, "Ministry and Community in the New Testament," *Essays on New Testament Themes*, 63-94. ENRIQUE DUSSEL, "The Differentiation of Charisms," *Charisms in the Church*, eds. CHRISTIAN DUQUOC – CASIANO FLORISTAN, Seabury, New York 1978, 38-55.

⁵² LEON CARDINAL SUENENS, "The Charismatic Dimension of the Church," *Council Speeches of Vatican II*, eds. Hans Kiing, et al., Glen Rock 1964, 29-34; HANS KIING, "The Church as the Creation of the Spirit," *The Church*, New York 1967, 150-203; KARL RAHNER, *The Dynamic Element in the Church (Quaestiones Disputatae, 12)*, Herder and Herder, New York 1964; RENÉ LAURENTIN, "Charisms: Terminological Precision," 3-12.

A CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS OF THE INDIAN SCENARIO (SUMMARY)

Dr. Selvaraj Arulnathan, S.J.

INTRODUCTION

India is a diverse land with different ethnicity, language, culture, religion, habits, etc. Co-existence of people with all these differences is the very nature of this great land. Any disturbance to this harmonious co-existence in spite of these differences will squarely affect the fibre and the fabric of the land which has been attempted from time to time, but failed.

The Aryans co-existed only when they incorporated the existing cultural and religious ethos. The so-called Hinduism is the combination of ancient tribal and Dravidian practices. The same was done by Islam and Christianity. Every religious and social movement did the same assimilation process in order to exist in this land. What we have today as Indian religion and culture is nothing pure to any religion or culture per se.

The framers of Indian Constitution have fully understood this aspect of our land and framed the Constitution without affecting any one of such traits but worked diligently to give due and relevant recognition to all of them. Dr. Ambedkar an expert in law and constitutional aspects addressed to the concerns of all types of people.

India before independence was a country of hundreds of small counties, diverse forms of rules with princely states, republics, smaller kingdoms, etc. There was nothing called Constitution to organize, govern and regulate the life of the people of the entire country called as India today. Today we have our own Constitution to govern our country called India with the division of the land into smaller States for better governance and regulation.

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The country was premised on “Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic” as the Preamble of the new Constitution of the newly formed country. The Preamble was adopted with the Constitution in the Constituent Assembly. It came into effect in 1950 along with the constitution. The Western understanding of secularism is non-interference of religion in the state governance. But the Indian understanding of secularism is religious pluralism. The term minority includes religious, linguistic, cultural minorities. And sadly, all the three minorities have problems due to majoritarian political agenda of India today.

New Economic Policy (NEP)

It is a divide line in Indian social, economic demographic factor. 1991 became a game changer in India in the socio-economic, educational, political and other fields. From 1991, the development discourse took a new direction. There are so many perceptible positive impacts because of New Economic Policy. The opening up of the economy has led to the rapid increase in foreign direct investment (FDI). Foreign exchange reserves reached the level of \$25,186 million at the end of March 1995 as compared to only \$ 3,962 million in 1980-90. During the period of reforms, India experienced considerable increase in exports of auto parts, engineering goods, IT software and textiles. New economic policy has also succeeded in checking inflation, increasing production, etc. Inflation remained consistent at about 5 per cent for quite some time, which in 1990-91 was as high as 17 per cent.

Since 1991, the private sector is playing a dominant role. The share of private sector has increased in all areas. With the introduction of economic reforms, fiscal deficit has come down considerably. But NEP has also brought in some serious adverse impacts. They are:

1. *Low Growth of Agriculture Sector*

Agriculture has been and still remains the backbone of the Indian economy. In 1951, agriculture sector provided employment to 72%, contributed 59 per cent of the GDP (gross domestic product). By 2001, the GDP went down drastically to 24 per cent and further to 22 per cent in 2006-07. This has resulted in a lowering per capita income for the farmers and increasing the rural indebtedness. Low investment, imbalance in fertilizer use, low seeds replacement rate, a distorted incentive system and low post-harvest value addition continued to be problem for the agriculture sector affecting greatly its performance. Within 20 years of the introduction of globalization, nearly 1 million farmers have committed suicide and sadly many more will follow in the coming years.

2. *Widening Rural-Urban Divide*

The positive impact of NEP is clearly visible on urban life but rural life in India has not changed much. It remains more or less the same. People are still living in houses made of mud barring the houses of a few rich and progressive farmers.

Life in rural India is miserable due to non-availability of electricity. Most of the indicators of development due to LPG have not touched the rural areas. Even now majority of the rural hamlets don't have proper water facility, electricity, proper roads or even toilets in their households. What is even worse is that essential commodities which are essential for rural needs like agriculture and other household purposes are diverted to corporates and rich urban inhabitants. It has created a huge income gap. As a result, rural people don't have the capacity to buy even the bare minimum needs.

3. *Adverse Impact on Autonomy of State*

Globalization has seriously limited the power of the State. Free trade limits the ability of the States to set policy and protect domestic companies. Global problems exceed the grasp of any individual State; and global norms and institutions become more powerful. At the influence and dictates of corporates, WB and IMF, budget allocation shows its back to the poor and the needy and subsidies, exemption in taxes, relaxation of rules in acquiring land take a back seat.

4. *Globalization Leads to Cultural Homogeneity*

Globalisation diminishes differences; global norms, ideas or practices overtake local components. Globalization has also contributed to the destruction of the environment through pollution and clearing of vegetation cover. With the construction of companies, the emissions from manufacturing plants are contributing to environmental pollution which further affects the health of many individuals. Construction also destroys the vegetation cover which is important for the very survival of both humans and other animals. Chemical pesticides and herbicides have created health hazards, animals were pumped full of hormones and antibiotics, which has resulted in diseases. Such commercial, agriculture and animal rearing have proved dangerous to human life. In India, chlorine, petro-chemicals, caustic soda and such other chemical industries have sprang up in large number since 1991-92. This has encouraged import of chemicals polluting the environment.

5. *Rise of Unemployment Rate*

Globalization has rendered many companies and their operations redundant. So either they are closed, wholly or partly, or are hived off or their ancillary units are declared sick. For example the decision of Hindustan Organic Chemicals to cease its benzene operations has caused closure of many related units. This in turn adversely affected the lives of its employees. Globalization has caused widespread unemployment either due to technological innovations or diversifications or relocations or closure of companies. Employees have also been retrenched because of the company's cost-cutting measures due to the recent global slowdown.

6. *Increase in Human Rights Violations*

As the supremacy of many States decline and that of corporations rise, capacity of the latter to violate the rights of people or to create conditions in which rights become harder to protect, has increased tremendously. Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that shocking reports surface about MNCs making considerable profits at the expense of people.

It is to be noted that India's richest 1% have cornered 73% of wealth generated last year according to Oxfam Survey. There are four Indians in the world's top ten richest people namely Mukesh Ambani, Dilip Shanghvi, Azim Premji and Shiv Nadar. The most expensive house in the world is in India – Antilla. The estimated cost is about 6,800 crores. There are only 6 people living in this house. At the same time, India has the poorest of the poor in the world. 9 states of are than 26 sub-Saharan countries of Africa. There has been systematic impoverishment of the people. They are mainly Dalits, Adivasis, minorities and poor OBCs.

Minorities in India

Minorities in India are systematically attacked in different ways. Violence against the minorities is on the rise in the recent years beyond imagination. Mob-lynching of the minorities has become order of the day. At least eight States in India has anti-conversion law. This law is used mainly for falsely accusing those who are not wanted by Hindutva advocates. Anti-conversion bill, beef-ban, anti-cow slaughter law, love jihad, anti-Romeo squad, *gharwapsi* programme, etc. are some of the poisonous practices let loose in the society to poison it and violently attack the minorities. Politicians spread hate messages and become hate-mongers. Safronization of every important institution in India is in the process. Even educational system is polluted and safronised. Even history is re-written and taught

propagating a particular narrow ideology. Judiciary, the last pillar of hope for the Dalits, Adivasis and minorities is not spared.

Our Response as Consecrated Persons

In this dangerous and violent situation prevailing in today's India, what can be the response of the consecrated persons?

- We need to side with the people in the periphery — Dalits, adivasis, minorities, poor OBCs.
- We need to be politically conscious and active. Even if we don't take part in party politics, we should be part of the political change in our country.
- We need to educate our people and our stakeholders about the way we are systematically discriminated and pushed to the periphery.
- We need to prepare people in civil services who can speak for us, who can raise the concerns of the poor, Dalits, Adivasis, minorities and all other socially and economically marginalized section of the society.
- We need to move away from helping our enemies through our institutions to our friends and allies and counter the challenges that we face.
- We need to protect genuine Indian people culture, history, and legacy by standing for Indian Constitution, democracy and national harmony and unity in diversity.
- To achieve all these ends, we need a revision of our religious formation and address these issues of our times.

We need to think, feel and act as and with Indians.

INDIAN CONSTITUTION: A FUNDAMENTAL SOURCE OF REFERENCE

Advocate Robin Christopher

We shall begin our discussion asking a question what a Constitution is. In the present Indian situation of political exclusivity, division and intimidation, can the Indian Constitution be a fundamental source of reference for an India which is inclusive, secular and religiously tolerant? Is it possible that the Constitution be a source of our reference when we as consecrated persons believe that Jesus is the source of everything? Many consecrated persons have only minimum knowledge of the Indian Constitution. Many have no motivation to learn deeply different aspects of our Constitution. For some, Indian Constitution does not make any sense. Others remember the Constitution only on Republic day. There are also Indians who compartmentalize the Constitution and fail to have harmonious and comprehensive understanding of the Constitution.

Constitution is basically a social contract; a social contract between the citizens and the State. It is an arrangement of all the aspects of the citizen's life with the state: be it social, economical, political, cultural, religious and ideological. It speaks of the rights of the citizens and their corresponding duties. The basic principles and laws of a nation, state, or social group that determine the powers and duties of the government and guarantee certain rights to the people in it. It is a written instrument embodying the rules of a political organization. It is the mode in which a state is organized and the manner in which sovereign power is distributed. It is an established law.

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Dr. Ambedkar and Indian Constitution

B. R. Ambedkar was a member of the Constituent Assembly. He resigned on 10th October 1951. In his resignation letter, he expressed his deep dissatisfaction. He writes:

“The British had resiled from the commitments they had made in the matter of constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Castes, and the Scheduled Castes had no knowing as to what the Constituent Assembly would do on that behalf. In this period of anxiety I had prepared a report on the condition of the Scheduled Castes for submission to the United Nations. But I did not submit it. I felt that it would be better to wait until the Constituent Assembly and the future Parliament was given a chance to deal with the matter. The provisions made in the Constitution for safeguarding the position of the Scheduled Castes were not to my satisfaction. However, I accepted them for what they were worth hoping that the Government will show some determination to make them effective.”

Dr. Ambedkar and His Path to the Constituent Assembly

As a consequence of the Cabinet Mission's ill-fated attempt to break a deal between the Congress and Muslim League, elections were held in July 1946 to the provincial legislatures of British India. These legislatures then elected 296 members to the Constituent Assembly (allocated roughly in the ratio of one to one million). The remaining seats in the Assembly were to be filled by representatives from princely states. In this election Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar and his Schedule caste Federation were jointly defeated by the Congress and Left. The Congress in Bombay, headed by Prime Minister B.G. Kher and under instructions from Sardar Patel, ensured that Dr. Ambedkar was not elected and be part of the constitution framing team.

However, Namsudras of the Bengal realized this threat and great leader Mahapran Jogendra Nath Mandal (with the assistance of Mukund Bihari Mallick) who was nominated from Jessore and Khulna (undivided Bengal) sacrificed his seat so that Dr. Ambedkar becomes part of the 296 member constituent Assembly. Dr. Ambedkar was elected by the undivided Bengal legislature with five transferable votes (a minimum of four was required). The Scheduled Castes Federation did not have five members in the Bengal legislature. Therefore, it has been said that the votes for Dr. Ambedkar came from Anglo-Indian member, independent members who were Dalits, and possibly even the Muslim League. He was the sole Schedule caste representative in the Constituent Assembly of the Scheduled Caste Federation.

Dr. Ambedkar was forced to seek election from Bengal, a province he did not have much connection with, because he lacked the requisite support in his home province of Bombay. Throughout the 1940s, Dr. Ambedkar and the Congress clashed bitterly over the issue of Scheduled Caste rights and representation. Dr. Ambedkar was an un-yielding critic of the party's positions on many issues, which he believed were not in the better interest to the Scheduled Castes.

According to the Partition, any constituency which had more than 50% population of Muslims in Pakistan and East Bengal provinces had to be given to either Pakistan or East Bengal. But the Constituency which Dr. Ambedkar represented from Bengal-Jessore and Khulna had 48% Muslim population and Hindus/dalits were mostly rest which according to the Partition policy should have been remained with present India. But Congress played a card making sure that Dr. Ambedkar represented Jessore and Khulna go to East Bengal which technically made Dr. Ambedkar to be part of Pakistan constituent Assembly. Dr. Ambedkar people were mainly in India and what help would they get if he became part of Pakistan Constituent Assembly? Understanding the situation, he resigned from the post of East Bengal.

Dr. Ambedkar visited British Prime minister and Opposition leader and conveyed the injustice done to him. The British government took a serious note on this issue as this was against the partition and informed Nehru to let Jaisur and Kulna remain with India or take Dr. Ambedkar into constituent assembly from other place within the partitioned India. If this order was not followed, then there could be delay to sort this issue. As this issue was directly with flaunting the partition policy, the congress realized that it would definitely have bad effect on partition process which had already started seeing the bloodshed.

Earlier, Congress had planned that Mr. Malavankar to preside over the Constituent Assembly, as Malavankar was not in the Constituent Assembly; it made Jurist Jayakar to resign from his constituency in Pune to replace Malavankar to his position. But the Congress had realized the British's serious concern over the injustice done to Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar from Jaisur and Kulna seat and the concern over issues of partition.

Congress also had a major concern of separate representation of Schedule caste/Tribe within India before Poona Pact. Congress knew it would cope badly with the Pakistan partition and was not ready for any issues with the Schedule caste/Tribe. Dr. Ambedkar was a very strong critique whom they had to face. Amicable solution was to keep Dr. Ambedkar at least in some decision process. Within the Congress

there were some members who had worked with Dr. Ambedkar in Constituent Assembly during the 1946 tenure and appreciated his professional approach, rapport and stupendous knowledge on Constitution and were compatible to work with him for framing the Constitution.

Congress was looking at other countries constitutional experts. Meanwhile, Dr. Ambedkar wrote “States and Minorities”. Here, he presented the Rights and the way to secure them in the Constitution of Free India. Framed as the ‘Constitution of the United States of India’”, he submitted as a memorandum to the Fundamental Rights sub-committee. His writing came in the form of book before it could be presented to the constitution assembly. It was available with all the congress members of the Constituent Assembly who appreciated his work and realized his excellent Constitutional knowledge. This book is the foundation of our Constitution today.

The work done by Dr. Babasaheb in various sub-committees (Advisory Committee, Fundamental Rights sub-committee, Minorities sub-committee, Union Constitution Committee) of the Constitutional Assembly was considered very useful. All these convinced the Congress beyond doubt that the legislation and solidification of freedom would not be easy without the service of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Meanwhile, Rajendra Prasad understood the importance of Ambedkar for the work of the Constitution and India’s effort to be independent and republic. At the same time, Sardar Patel who restricted Babasaheb’s entry in 1946, started to ensure that Ambedkar remained in the Constituent Assembly

Ambedkar biographer, Dhananjay Keer believes that Dr. Ambedkar was included in the cabinet through the collective efforts of Sardar Patel, S. K. Patil, Acharya Donde, and Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhi only granted formal approval for this plan when it was presented to him by Nehru. That formal approval was not based on love but based on thorough analysis of how much juice could be taken out of sugarcane and then throw him out as they did in 1952 and 1954 Lok Sabha Elections.

On 29th August 1947, a committee was constituted to frame the Constitution of India. Dr. Ambedkar was chosen as its Chairman. Shri T. T. Krishnamachari, a member of the committeesaid:

“Though a committee of seven members was formed, one of them resigned. Another was nominated in his place. Another member died. No one took his place. One of the members was very busy with government work. Owing to ill health two other members were far away from Delhi. As a result, Dr. Ambedkar alone had to

carry the entire burden of preparing the draft of the Constitution. The work he has done is admirable”.

As the Minister for Law, Dr. Ambedkar placed the draft Constitution before the Constituent Assembly on 4th November 1948. Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar never shared the same political or social philosophy and there was no so popularized love of Gandhi/Congress towards Dr. Ambedkar as its evident after the constitution was framed:

In 1952, Dr. Ambedkar competed for the North Mumbai Lok Sabha seat and was defeated by his former personal aide N.S. Kajolkar. Congress gave a reason that Dr. Ambedkar was with Social party and they betrayed him as an excuse but the fact is Dr. Ambedkar had just resigned due to Hindu code bill issue just before participating in the 1952 Lok Sabha election from North Mumbai. Congress played the subcaste politics against Babasaheb nominating his former aide N.S Kajrolkar against him and restricted him into the parliament. Interestingly, it didn't end there as Dr. Ambedkar was subsequently elected to the Rajya Sabha without full Congress support and was again defeated in 1954 by Congress in Bhandara by-election.

Constitutional Ideals

Indian Constitution is commitment to democracy. It guarantees Justice, Equality and Freedom to all the people of India irrespective of caste, language and religion. These three ideals are enshrined in the preamble of the Indian Constitution. Justice: To ensure justice to each and every citizen irrespective of his/her caste, creed and gender. Liberty: Every citizen should have freedom to live a dignified life and should have liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. Equality: It asserts that all Indian citizens are equal before the law of the land. The government is obliged to ensure equality of opportunity for all citizens. India is a sovereign democratic and republic.

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution

The Indian Constitution begins with the Preamble:

“WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY, of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, DO HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.”

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution is very important and it is the very heart of the Constitution. It contains the ideals, the objectives and the basic principles. The features of the Constitution have evolved directly and indirectly from the objectives. The significance of the Preamble lies in its components. It embodies the source of the Constitution i.e., the people of India. The ideals of justice, liberty, equality, fraternity reflects the objectives of the Constitution.

History of the Preamble

The Constitution begins with the preamble yet it was not the first one to be written. It was written lastly. Pundit Thakur Das Bhargav rose of poetic heights by saying that “the Preamble is the most precious part of the constitution. It is the soul of the Constitution. It is a key to the Constitution. It is a jewel set in the Constitution”. Accordingly, the preamble to the Indian Constitution spells out the basic philosophy contained in the body of the Indian Constitution.

Reading through the Preamble, one can see the purpose that it serves, namely, the declaration of

- (a) The source of the constitution;
- (b) a statement of its objectives and
- (c) the date of its adoption.

The Preamble, in brief, explains the objectives of the Constitution in two ways: one, about the structure of the governance and the other, about the ideals to be achieved in independent India. It is because of this that the Preamble is considered to be the key of the entire Constitution.

The Objectives

The objectives of the Constitution are laid down in the Preamble. They are:

It describes the Indian State as Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic. (Socialist, Secular added by 42nd Amendment in 1976).

It makes no discrimination among her citizens. It provides to all the citizens of India i.e., a) Justice: social, economic and political; b) Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; c) Equality of status and opportunity and d) Fraternity assuring dignity of the individual and unity and integrity of the nation.

It is the resolve of the people of India to constitute India into Sovereign, Democratic, Republic. From the Preamble of the Constitution, it is clear that the framers attached importance to the sovereignty of the people. The ideas reassert the sovereignty and paramount importance of the people's will over everything. The idea of republic indicates the representative character of its sovereign democracy. It means that the absolute power vested in the people of India under the Constitution is to be exercised by them through their duly elected representative in the various union and states legislatures.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is one of the foremost elements of any independent State. It means absolute independence, i.e., a government which is not controlled by any other power; be it internal or external. A country cannot have its own constitution without being sovereign. India is a sovereign country. It is free from external control. It can frame its policies without pressure any other countries or agencies. India is free to formulate its own foreign policy. "Sovereignty" is therefore a term of art rather than a legal expression capable of a precise definition.

Socialist

The word socialist was not there in the Preamble of the Constitution in its original form. In 1976, the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution incorporated 'Socialist' and 'Secular', in the Preamble. The word 'Socialism' had been used in the context of economic planning. It signifies major role in the economy. It also means commitment to attain ideals like removal of inequalities, provision of minimum basic necessities to all and equal pay for equal work. In the Directive Principles of the State Policy, these ideals have been incorporated as well as partly, implemented in the Constitution.

Socialism is implicit in the Preamble and the Directive Principle of the Constitution. The term "economic justice" in the Preamble denotes nothing but India's resolve to bring socio-economic revolution. The Directive Principles, particularly Article 39 (b) and (c) of Constitution are charters of social and economic liberties of the people. The word 'socialism' has, however, no definite meaning. It has been invariably used in both types of Constitutions — democratic and communistic. Generally, the term implies a system of government in which the means of production are wholly or partially controlled by the State. India's socialism is, however, a democratic socialism and not a 'communistic socialism'. For this purpose, the preamble has combined both the words, Socialism and Democracy

in the Preamble. This combination of words, socialism and democracy has been criticized by many writers. It has been said that these cannot co-exist.

This criticism is, however, not justified in view of the gradual change of thinking of the modern socialists. Their thinking is in line with the idea of welfare state which would prevent only the excess of exploitation and free competition without destroying individual initiative and without detriment to the political freedoms. It is thus the marriage of democracy and socialism which has been embedded in the Indian Constitution.

In Excel Wear vs Union of India, the S.C. considered the effect of the word 'socialist' in the Preamble. The Court held that addition of the word "Socialist" might enable the courts to lean more in favor of nationalization and state ownership of an industry.

In D.S. Nataraj vs Union of India, the S.C. held that the basic framework of socialism is to provide a decent standard of life to the working people and especially provide security from cradle to grave. This amongst others are on economic side envisaged economic equality and equitable distribution of income.

Secularism

In the context of secularism in India, it is said that 'India is neither religious, nor irreligious nor anti-religious.' It implies that in India there will be no 'State' religion — the 'State' will not support any particular religion out of public fund. It has two implications. They are:

- a) Every individual is free to believe in, and practice, any religion he/ she belongs to, and,
- b) State will not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of religion.

The concept of secularism was already implicit in the Constitution, "liberty of belief, faith and worship". Articles 25 to 28 of the Constitution guarantee to every person the freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice and propagate religion. *In St. Xavier's College vs State of Gujarat*, the SC has held, "although the words 'SECULAR STATE' are not expressly mentioned in the Constitution but there can be no doubt that the Constitution-makers wanted to establish such a state" and accordingly Articles 25 to 28 have been included in the Constitution.

In S.R. Bommai vs Union of India, the supreme court held that "secularism is the basic feature of the Constitution." *In Aruna Roy vs Union of India*, the Supreme Court

has said that Secularism has a positive meaning that is developing, understanding and respect towards different religions.

There is no mysticism in the secular character of the State. Secularism is not anti-God; it treats alike the devout, the agnostic and the atheist. It eliminates God from the matters of the state and ensures that no one shall be discriminated against another on the ground of religion.

Democratic Republic

The last line of the Preamble says “Hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution’. In fact, the Democratic principles of the country flow from this memorable last line of the Preamble. Democracy is generally known as government of the people, by the people and for the people. Effectively this means that the Government is elected by the people and it is responsible and accountable to the people. The democratic principles are highlighted with the provisions of universal adult franchise, elections, fundamental rights, and responsible government. The Preamble also declares India as a Republic. It means that the head of the State is the President who is indirectly elected and he is not a hereditary ruler as in case of the British Monarch.

Envisioning Democracy

Justice

Justice promises to give people what they are entitled to in terms of basic rights to food, clothing, housing, participation in the decision-making and living with dignity as Human Beings. The Preamble covers all these dimensions of justice: social, economic and political besides, granting of political justice in the form of universal adult franchise or the representative form of democracy.

Liberty

The Preamble also mentions about liberty of thought and expression. These freedoms have been guaranteed in the Constitution through the Fundamental Rights. Though freedom from want has not been guaranteed in the Fundamental Rights, certain directives to the State have been mentioned in the Directive Principles.

The importance of the judiciary in India in this connection must also be highlighted. In this connection reference may be made to two decisions of the Supreme Court viz., Govt. of A.P. and others vs. P. Laxmi Devi and Deepak Bajaj vs. State of Maharashtra and others.

In these cases, the Supreme Court has emphasized the importance of liberty for progress, and has observed that the judiciary must act as guardians of the liberties of the people, protecting them against executive or even legislative arbitrariness or despotism.

Liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate entities but as a trinity. They form a union in that and to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy.

Equality

Equality is considered to be the essence of modern democratic ideology. The Constitution-makers placed the ideals of equality in a place of pride in the Preamble. All kinds of inequality based on the concept of rulers and the ruled or on the basis of caste and gender, were to be eliminated.

All citizens of India should be treated equally and extended equal protection of law without any discrimination based on caste, creed, birth, religion, sex, etc. Similarly equality of opportunities implies that regardless of the socio-economic situations into which one is born, he/she will have the same chance as everybody else to develop his/ her talents and choose means of livelihood.

Fraternity, Dignity, Unity and Integrity

In the background of India's multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi- religious society and keeping in view the partition of the country, the framers of the Constitution were very much concerned about the unity and integrity of our newly independent country. There was a need for harmonious co-existence among various religious, linguistic, cultural and economic groups. Inclusion of phrases like 'dignity of individuals', 'fraternity among people' and 'unity and integrity of the nation' in the Preamble highlight such a need.

"Some people have started saying that to combat terrorism, it is necessary to curtail civil liberties and introduce draconian laws. To my mind, this is a dangerous idea, and hence it is necessary to explain the importance of liberty and democracy", said Justice Markandey Katju.

GLOBALIZATION AND ITS POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON RURAL INDIA

Dr. M. Hilaria Soundari

Every society is exposed to perpetual change as a law of nature. The Indian history has traces its forced changes with the invasion of Moghul and later with the colonization of the British. The past three decades, the Indian society has been imposed with the process of globalization. Economy of India experienced major changes in the policy during the early 1990s, that has got the newer mode of economic reform, popularly marked as Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (or the model of LPG). LPG aimed in making Indian economy the fastest growing front and being competitive on international platform. It has increased its importance of interaction and decision making at local, national, regional and international levels. It has forged new relationships, activated commitments, connected across difference, enhanced production, communication and technologies across the globe.

Deliberation of Globalization

There is an on-going dispute on the concept of globalization. Globalization has many meanings depending on the context and on the person who is talking about.¹ Opening the frontiers of the country to globalization process has allowed not only the culturally accepted practices but also it has ruined the highly valued cultural practices of this land. These trends of globalization have been affecting economic,

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social and technological change gradually. It also raises the question whether it has been inclusive of all sectors of people or has it widened the divide on the basis of gender and geographical area. This present study introspects the globalization and its potential effects caused in the rural area.

Rural India

India, the agrarian country lives in villages. According to census of Indian subcontinent (2011), 68.8 % of population lives in rural area. Among the rural population 48.6 % of them are women. Though the sex ratio in the rural area is comparatively higher than the urban area.

Table 1. Population in India

Indian Population (%)		Male (%)	Female (%)	Sex Ratio
			51.5	48.5
Rural	68.8	51.4	48.6	947
Urban	31.2	51.9	48.1	926

Source : Census India, 2011

The huge rural population posed with severe challenges to earn their livelihood. Some of the other acute problems faced by them are illiteracy, poverty, caste discrimination and geographical exclusion.

Table 2. Literacy Rate

Area	Literacy Rate (%)			
	Women		Men	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
India	53.7	65.5	75.3	82.1
Rural	46.1	58.8	70.7	78.6
Urban	72.9	79.9	86.3	89.7

Source: Census India, 2001 - 2011

As depicted in table 2 the rural women have reached only 58.8 per cent of literacy rate. It is a stumbling block for these women to move forward in their occupational opportunity and in the process of empowerment.

The geographical exclusion has portrayed that around 833.1 million people live in 640,867 different villages. These hamlets vary in its size considerably i.e.

236,004 Indian villages have a population of fewer than 500, while 3,976 villages have a population of more than 10,000.

The planning commission (2014) estimated that 30.9% of the rural population was below the poverty line in 2011-12. One half of India's poor are located in the three states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh. Moreover, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Orissa accounted for 22.5% of people living below poverty line.²

Table 3. Wage Differences

Daily wages in	Women (Rs.)	Men (Rs.)
Directly employment	131.23	258.04
Public sector	260.81	430.87
Joint sector	244.13	329.34
Private sector	126.50	242.46

Source: Labour bureau, 2012

Despite the exposure to the global scenario, there exists wage difference between women and men. It is prevalent invariably both in rural and urban areas. With these existing realities, rural India has to face the various challenges of globalization too.

Economic Globalization in Rural Area

Economic globalization has opened up free market economy, competition and division of labour. India opened its door to the globalization as it opened Dutch East India Company in 1602. Besides, its monopoly of spice trade, it begun to colonize territories and enslave indigenous people. It keeps expanding its zone even to the interior or remote villages of independent India intensely in the past three decades.

According to Stiglitz (2006), the proof of globalization tends to be jumbled. Partially, the cause is that global trading deals have not managed to boost development in non-rich nations because there is no balance. The developed western economies could impose extra costs on items manufactured by developed nations were roughly four times more compared with items which were generated by other industry based nations.³

The rural petty shops portray how the globalization has had a high way journey to remote villages. Consequently, where tender coconut water could not impress, coco

cola is finding easy entry. Where local peanuts are not valued, imported chocolates are most wanted. Where handlooms are looked down, branded t-shirts are on high demand. The other economic constraints faced in the rural area are the alienation of agriculture and the uncertainty of cultivation. Another concern of rural area is migration to urban cities or to other countries. This has affected the family living of the villages.

Social Globalization in Villages

Women in the villages are in most disadvantages position than their counterpart in neighboring cities. Among the female population of 496.5 million, 360.95 million are in rural area (census, 2011).⁴ One of the major impact of globalization on rural women is that a large number of them are forced to be primary breadwinners in several cases.⁵ With the failure of agriculture, men in the families migrate to urban areas. Seldom they return to the village to take care of the families. Some of them even establish another family in the cities, leaving the women to shoulder the entire family responsibility.

Though women are not exposed to the enriching science and technology, they are opened to the mass media and the devastating social media. It has made their thinking narrow, reduced their evening hours of family time and increased their time in front of the television. Tele-conversations and television serials of patriarchal thinking have ruined the common meals in the evening and community gathering in the rural area. As a result, India stands in 131st position among 188 countries of Gender Inequality Index (GII) (HDR, 2016).

Technological Globalization of Rural Area

Rural areas have limited or no access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). For instance, Internet is perhaps the most visible aspect of globalization and in many ways its driving force.⁶ These technologies are capable of handling of information and facilitate different forms of communication among human actors, between human beings and electronic systems. Yet, large sections of rural population are alien to the digital world and print media. The different types of hardware such as powerful personal computers, netbooks, new generation cell phones or to the types of software, cloud computing with online storage such as skydrive, google drive, drop box, National Informatics Centre (NIC) are not popularized comparatively.

‘Shining India’ is only for media, but in reality gender discrimination, caste victimization and poor deficits continue to increase day after day. More than the

deprivations of socio-economic and technological advancement, the denial of human rights and dignity imposed on these rural people draws the attention of persons with service mindedness.

Call for the Consecrated Persons

The consecrated persons are assigned with the special call of responding to the impact of globalization on the vulnerable groups. Starting with the purchase of local products to educating the young generation to keep away from imported goods, the influence on globalization on economic elements can be minimized. From respecting the women within the church to sharing the anguish of deserted and destitute women can help in diminishing negative impact on social globalization. Diligent use of technology in the personal and public life can reduce the influence of technological globalization.

Conclusion

Changes in life are inevitable especially in the fast growing contemporary society, which is driven by globalization. For elites it is more advantageous than to the less privileged rural poor. It has become the clarion call for the consecrated persons to care for them and to safeguard or restore their human dignity. Every consecrated person is privileged to reach out another disadvantaged human being in some form of other. In being a salt, leaven and light amidst these rural masses, a consecrated person can make a difference in their lives.

Endnotes

¹ RINKU AGRAWAL, "Globalization and Its Effect on India", *Economic Affairs* 59 (2014) 797-803 (Special Issue).

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³ Cf. JOSEPH STIGLITZ, *Making Globalization Work: The Next Steps to Global Justice*, New York 2006.

⁴ Cf. MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT, "Statistical Profile on Women Labour (2009 – 2011)", Labour Bureau, 2012.

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POLITICS OF MAJORITARIANISM: A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY (SUMMARY)

Dr. Selvaraj Arulnathan, S.J.

Introduction

India is a diverse and pluralist society. Any attempt to change this natural reality of India will result in chaos and violence. Unfortunately, today systematic efforts are made to change its heterogeneous nature to homogeneous society. Cultural nationalism is aggressively propagated against Constitutional nationalism. Attempts are made to change its modern institutions to age old traditional past. Hindu majoritarianism is used to push this agenda.

Majoritarianism

What is majoritarianism? It is imposing the will and wish of the majority on the minority. A group feels that it loses its base, politically, numerically or even popularly and it tries to impose its agenda and asserts itself using even aggressive and violent way with lies and fake news. In India, many categories are used to construct majoritarianism. They are caste, religion, culture, language and so on. Hindutva majoritarianism has taken religion as a tool to claim its majoritarian idea to exclude and subdue others

This idea based on religion has been introduced even before independence, and even before the formation of the RSS movement. It was done during the time of British when they first went in for census enumeration based on religion.

Majoritarianism Vs. Democracy

Both these terms are fundamentally different from one another. Under a democratic majoritarian political structure, the majority would not exclude any minority from future participation in the democratic process.

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Religion

It is difficult to explain in words what religion is all about. Each person may experience and explain religion in different ways according to their personal experiences and religious upbringing. For some, religion is a mere idea of the existence of God. For others, it is simple about a sacred text. For a few, it is all about a congregation.

Formation of Hinduism as a Religion

When was Hinduism formed as a religion? It is very difficult to answer as there is no definite concrete time of the formation of Hinduism as a religion. The British rulers considered all the people of India as Hindus except the Muslims, the Christians and the Buddhists. The terms Hindu and Hinduism were constructed by the British in the 8th Century. They were made to believe that the essence of India consisted in a number of Hindu Classical scriptures such as Vedas, Shastras, Manu Smriti, etc. This view was supported and elaborated by the Brahmins. The British gave an official seal and incorporated mostly Brahmins in their administrative structure which strengthened this position. The Census of 1881 defined the Hindu belief and considered Hinduism as a religion as those Indians who did not belong to the religions of Islam, Christianity and Buddhism were taken for granted as belonging to the religion of Hinduism. Thus at one stroke of pen, the majority of Indian population became Hindus and today RSS plays on this card of majority of the Hindu population. As one can see clearly, there is no clear positive definition for the Hindu. It is understood only by the negation: all those who are not Christians, Jains, Muslims, Buddhists, etc. are the Hindus. Only 12% of the Indians are technically Hindus. Others are made as Hindus by force. We need to understand that the dalits, minorities, adivasis and most backward communities of India form 75% of Indian population and which is very huge and significant.

Two Types of Hindus

According to the Brahminic understanding, there are two types of Hindus. They are nominal Hindus and substantial Hindus. Substantial Hindus are the twice born and they are less than 15%. They are the former Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya categories. They are the people who are behind all ideological formation on Hindutva, but they never come into the scene. They quietly operate systematically behind the screen. The nominal Hindus are the single born and they are about 85% of the Hindu population. They are the former Sudras, untouchables and Adivasis. These are the people who have been in the forefront of all violence and anti-social activities.

Nationalism

We can speak of two types of nationalism: constitutional nationalism and cultural nationalism. Constitutional nationalism is enshrined in the Constitution and it is well explained in the preamble of the Constitution guaranteeing liberty, equality, fraternity, equitable justice to all the citizens of India irrespective of one's religion, caste, language, culture, etc. It is democratic in nature. On the contrary, cultural nationalism is anti-constitutional and undemocratic. All Hindutva agenda like *gharwapsi*, love jihad, cow vigilance, anti-Romeo squad, anti-conversion bill, etc. are the expression of the narrow-minded cultural nationalism.

Saffronization

India is silently witnessing the process of saffronization in all the traditional institution. In the *educational system*, Gita is taught compulsorily in all the CBSE schools. Indian history is totally changed and taught to assert that the Aryans are not from outside. Yoga is made compulsory in the schools. Attempts are made to keep the picture of Saraswathy in all the schools. These are just a few examples of saffronization in the educational institutions.

Judiciary: we have just witnessed for the first time in the independent India four senior most judges coming out and addressing to the press how saffronization is taking place in the judiciary

High level offices, ministries, PSUs are gradually and aggressively taking saffron colour. *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Swach Bharath*, etc. are only mere political slogans to achieve Hindutva agenda.

Alternative to Hindutva Majoritarianism

- We need to identify those people who are affected and made enemies of Hindutva agenda like Dalits, Adivasis, minorities, poor OBCs and engage ourselves constructively with them.
- Our political affiliation is to be with the Left parties, Congress and other secular forces.
- We need to partner with NGOs, CSOs, HR defenders, etc. in establishing India with Constitutional nationalism against cultural nationalism.
- We need to use Dr. Ambedkar principle: educate, organize and agitate.
- Constitutional education has to be given to all our stakeholders.

- We need to create grand alliance with all those who are victims of Hindutva agenda.
- We need to create alternative society with values of love, justice, forgiveness, compassion, religious tolerance, respect, human dignity, non-violence, acceptance of diversities, etc. by dethroning the fundamental and communal forces.
- We need to politicize our people.

SEARCHING FOR THE FOUNDATIONAL WISDOM IN RELIGIONS: A PATH TOWARDS INCLUSIVITY AND ACCEPTANCE

Dr. Xavier E. Manavath, CMF

Looking at the contemporary world with all its advancement in science and technology and the rising religious consciousness, there is one simple truth that is becoming increasingly clear to us: science and technology are not going to replace religion. They cannot survive as substitutes for religion. Arnold Toynbee, a British historian writes:

In my belief, science and technology [...] cannot satisfy the spiritual needs for which religion of all kinds does try to provide, though they may discredit some of the traditional dogmas of the so called “higher” religions. Historically, religion came first and science grew out of religion. Science has never superseded religion, and it is my expectation that it will never supersede it. For a true and lasting peace, a religious revolution is, I am sure, a *sine quanon*. By religion, I mean the overcoming of self-centredness in both individuals and communities by getting into the communion with the spiritual presence behind the universe and by bringing our wills into harmony with it. I think this is the only key to peace.¹

We can admit that what this historian said is prophetic. All the scientific progress we have attained, has not replaced religion. In fact, there is a rising religious consciousness, possibly as a reaction to extreme liberalism and secularism. Unfortunately, what we are witnessing today is a rising religious consciousness that polarizes and divides. Authentic religion is meant to unite and not divide. A religion that brings division and disunity is not authentic. It would have been easy to attain this unity, if there was only one religion. But there are multiple religious faith traditions, more so in our country, offering themselves as pathways of salvation. The increasing polarization among religions manifests itself in a certain kind of

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intolerance, fear and distrust of each other. It becomes particularly dangerous when governments start endorsing one particular religion, even within the secular fabric of the constitutions which they are supposed to uphold. A rise in such a polarized religious consciousness based on a particular religious tradition can endanger the harmony of the social order and the peaceful co-existence of multiple religious faith traditions; it can give rise to fanatic, imposing and violent forms of expression that threaten the secular fabric of the society and spread intolerance of those faith traditions, different from its own dominant form. This is what characterizes the contemporary social and political scenario, even of our own nation. How, then, can we arrive at a true, and therefore, lasting peace in the midst of religious pluralism, complemented by the wisdom that comes from scientific growth and development?

1. SEARCHING FOR A WAY

To foster harmonious human living in the context of religious pluralism, it is not enough that one understands the tenets of one's own religion. It is important that we tune to the foundational wisdom common to all religions. To be committed to one's own and at the same time to respect the other's, we certainly need a wider horizon and often will have to move beyond mere popular perceptions.²

We know that all religions speak about the Mystery that we call God. To be tuned to this wisdom, foundational and common to all religions, we will have to begin with the reality of the Mystery of God. Moving beneath the particular images of God that each religion projects,³ we will have to look at the Mystery of God more foundationally and universally. How do we understand the mystery of God in a more dialogical and integrational way so that it respects wisdom of all religions and also intelligible to the contemporary modern sciences.

We will also need such a re-visioning in our understanding of religions by asking more foundational questions. What religions really are? Why are there different religions? What are their common goals? What could be their common foundations and the shared formative wisdom that they embody?

The search is for a possible convergence of the basic formation insights in various traditions by employing methods of foundational theme tracing and integrative dialogue as developed by Adrian Van Kaam, an expert in the science of spiritual formation.⁴ Van Kaam is categorical:

No natural or human science, no philosophical or theological system, is sufficient to endow people with consonance. The knowledge that science, philosophy, and theology impart is of great importance, but it needs to be complemented by a more

proximate wisdom, nearer to life as lived in its immediacy. This kind of wisdom is sedimented in consonant form traditions developed by generations over and beyond their faith traditions.⁵

An understanding of their foundational formative wisdom can broaden our horizons, bring down our polarized and fanatic thinking and open the way towards more inclusivity and acceptance. Such an understanding will teach us to respect the rich variety of religious pluralism, helps us discern consonant and dissonant elements within a religious tradition and at the same time teach us to be truly committed to the unique richness of one's own adhered to faith.

2. REVISIONING THE MYSTERY OF GOD

Before we begin, let us look at the dilemma involved in the more popular perceptions of God prevalent among common people. It is difficult to arrive at a unified and shared understanding as there are conflicting perceptions among the believers.

2.1 Popular Meaning and the Dilemma

If we perceive God as a personal God, we run into gender problems and also problems related to anthropomorphism, visibility, and spatiality. If we perceive God as impersonal, it will contradict the experience of millions of worshippers. If we picture God in an image, there will be many images of God; it will lead to disputes among people of different religions as each religion holds on to a particular image of God. The question also arises whether God can be restricted to an image. If we perceive God as historical, we will run into the danger of nailing that God to a particular period of historicity and thereby would limit his presence. To gain an overarching presence God has to be trans-historical. However a trans-historical God will not have any earthly moorings. If we perceive God as someone whom we know, we would reduce that God into our own knowing; on the other hand; if we look at God essentially as a mystery, we can never know that God. If God is transcendent, such a God becomes far and very distant; if God is immanent, he can be reduced into everything. If God is perceived as just, confronting, disciplining, such a God will appear as a scrutinizing law giver; on the other hand, if God is seen as loving, caring, compassionate, it can be seen as a license for everyone to be whatever they want to be. The question now, is: how do we search for a more foundational understanding of God that is intelligible and meaningful in every religion and at the same time, goes beyond the narrow categories of each?

2.2 God as the Mystery of Formation

We all know that there is a Mystery to life and world which we can never fully understand. However you may language it, understand it or try to express it, it is still a mystery. We can call it the Mystery of all That is, the Whole, the Eternal Source of everything that exists. We live in it and surrounded by it. “It includes us, and yet it eludes us. It is beyond our rational analysis, beyond the control of our powers of willing or achieving”.⁶ Generations of philosophers, theologians, mystics, physicists and biologists have all continued to express the profound interconnectedness of everything with everything else; this inter-forming relatedness is indeed one aspect of the all-encompassing mystery of being.⁷ We are all and always placed within a network of inter-forming relationship that involves humans, animals, nature, history and cosmos. Van Kaam calls it *Mystery of Formation*, which is at the root of all formation in the universe, world and history including all formation, human formation and preformation. It is the root of all life in and around us.⁸ God can be seen as this mystery hidden beneath the interwoven web of life that holds everything together.⁹ Regarding its mysteriousness, Van Kaam writes:

We cannot deny that the marvel of universal formation is a mystery that we cannot solve. Nobody can claim to have mastered all the secrets of the ongoing formation of the universe, of humanity, history, and individual existence. We know that we are unable to penetrate the ultimate why, how, and when of the cosmic processes that we share and that still surpass us, for we can never dominate all of them in every detail; neither can we fully penetrate the secret of their hidden consonance, of the ultimate meaning and purpose of our role in them. No matter how far we disclose their meaning and dynamics, there remains a residue of an enigma we cannot unravel.¹⁰

Yet this mystery of formation is one that reveals and manifests itself everywhere. It is like a “never ending dance of rising and falling of forms in cosmos, humanity, culture and history.”¹¹ According to Van Kaam, the formation mystery discloses itself in four main ways which can be called Epiphanies; cosmic, historic, human and trans-human epiphanies. More specifically, through these epiphanies, the mystery of formation concretely manifests itself in things, events, and people, while the trans-human epiphany provides the possibility for divine incarnations.¹² It is no wonder that Teilhard de Chardin writes:

All around us, to right and left, in front and behind, above and below, we have only had to go a little beyond the frontier of sensible appearances in order to see the divine welling up and showing through. But it is not only close to us, in front

of us that the divine presence has revealed itself. It has sprung up so universally, and we find ourselves so surrounded and transfixed by it that there is no room left to fall down and adore it, even within ourselves. By means of all created things, without exception, the divine assails us, penetrates us and moulds us. We imagined as distant and inaccessible, where as in fact we live steeped in its burning layers. *In eovivimus*. As Jacob said, awakening from his dream, this world, this palpable world to which we brought the boredom and callousness reserved for profane places, is in truth a holy place and we did not know it. ¹³

It is this Mystery that constantly forms, nurtures, cares for and makes us who we are as we live, move and have our being in it. In relation to this Mystery, our deepest dispositions has to be gratitude, sourced in wonder.

3. RELIGIONS: WHAT THEY REALLY ARE

Even as we adhere to the practice of a religion and live immersed in it, it is good at times, to take stand outside of it, look and assess it more objectively. Living immersed in it, we often get carried away by its popular perceptions, which can be misleading.

3.1 Popular Meanings and the Resulting Dilemma

In its common sense reading, religion comes across as something rigid and static; often seen as a set of rules, rites and norms to be followed or carefully observed. There are others who see it as something intellectual; a set of dogmas and doctrines to be believed. Many also consider it as something visual, associating it with a particular image of God and the corresponding place of worship, art, architecture, literature. Seen in this way, (rules, rituals, dogmas or images,) we can never arrive at a common platform, because norms, dogmas and images in every religion are different. Such an understanding can lead to the dangers of getting caught up in the “superficialities” or accidentals, resulting in religious exclusivism, fanaticism, fundamentalism, superiority, rivalry, competition, indifferentism, eclectism, etc.

Moving beneath these externals that are different and, often, conducive to division and disunity, let us take a more foundational approach which alone can mediate to us a universal ecumenical wisdom needed for a world where there is peaceful and harmonious co-existence of different religions.

3.2 Religions as Faith/Form Traditions

Religion, essentially, is about relationship; the relationship between ourselves and the Mystery of Formation that surrounds us. Etymologically, the word,

“religion” is derived from the Latin word, *re-ligare*. Religion is essentially a means to get ourselves re-connected with the Mystery. Depending on these two polarities, we can also approach religions and see them essentially as Faith Traditions.¹⁴

From a Divine Perspective: Religions are organized belief systems or faith traditions, that speak about this ultimate Mystery of Formation and offer to the human spirit varied explanations and images of that One Transcendent Mystery.¹⁵ They tell us what to believe about that Mystery which we usually call, the Holy Other or God. They explain the basic relationship between and among God, world, ourselves and others in a meaningful and coherent way, and thus, offer answers to the ultimate and basic formation questions about life and world. Through our insertion into these faith traditions or the belief systems, we are being co-formed and nurtured within the ambience of these faith traditions, shaping the way we think, live, decide and act.

From a Human perspective: Faith traditions are a necessity. The word “tradition” comes from the Latin word, *tradere*, which means “handing down” or “handing over.” Humans, at birth, are born into a chaotic world. The human infants are stripped out of the embryonic security and are suddenly thrown into a world which, initially is unmanageable and incomprehensible. It is no wonder that they at birth utter a cry of desperation and, helplessness as they cannot manage the world around them. In fact, we are confronted with the question of a chaotic or purposive world; every human being is faced with a crucial faith option, a “foundational formation decision”¹⁶ to trust or distrust, to “believe in the meaningfulness or meaninglessness of their life formation.” We can call this an option for an appreciative abandonment to the forming Mystery or to feel abandoned in this cosmos as in a meaningless and careless system closed in upon itself. As humans, we are, and remain, fundamentally spiritual beings and, therefore, are oriented in our depths to be open to the manifestations of this forming Mystery.

Though we are oriented in our depths to the recognition and love of this all embracing Mystery, we are not compelled to say yes or no. However, there could be many factors that can hinder our freedom and therefore affect our choice. There are many who choose to live for years or even for a life time, as if living had nothing to do with this awesome Mystery that contains us. We can feel alone, as if we were not beloved in our very being. This crucial faith option, to surrender or not to surrender is an “utterly primal spiritual option with pervasive consequences” as it changes the meaning of absolutely everything that touches us.¹⁷ This is where the religious faith tradition comes in. The faith tradition, mediated through the intimate familial environment gradually imparts to the child a world of meaning, order, coherence

and purpose. Those who say yes to the Mystery within the ambience of a faith tradition are opening themselves to a fundamental human possibility; they are joining a stream of seekers and pilgrims whose presence is seen in every age and in all continents. Faith tradition facilitates the infusion of the foundational triad of faith, hope, and love in the humans. And as such, humans are instinct-poor and more dependent on the faith traditions unlike the animal world which is instinctively strong and not dependent on traditions.

Through the vital care, faith, hope and love, provided by the intimate familial environment, the child is taken up in a special community of people living by similar preferred form directives, coming from a common faith tradition. Parents, family, community which form a certain shared tradition initiates children in certain communal forms of living that are rooted in the faith traditions. Children search for their identity, and their form of living in the light of these concrete directions. At least in some measure, their search will be influenced by these faith/form directives even if they oppose them later in life. Form directives are dynamically present in the parents and their faith and form traditions. They precede any reflective appraisal and choice of life formation on the part of the children. This is a “given,” an original orientation that precedes any later formation.

We know that the daily formation of life and world can only proceed effectively if we somehow abandon ourselves to this mystery, at least in some implicit, elementary faith, hope, and love.

3.3 Roles of Faith Traditions in Human Formation

Faith traditions offer basic beliefs with regard to the formation mystery in its Cosmic, Historic and Human epiphanies. They provide general faith assumptions (at the level of theology or ideology) about the nature of life and world which cannot be verified by empirical research; for example, the faith assumptions in Christianity, Freudian concept of the lack of freedom, Roger’s non-directive approach, etc.

They provide meaningful revelations, ideals, images, stories, myths, symbols, rites, rituals, and writings that nourish living faith, hope and love in regard to the formation mystery as understood in that tradition. They explain the ultimate meaningfulness and beneficence of the formation mystery. Such basic beliefs and their immediate symbols and implications are the heart of any religious or humanist faith tradition. They are the necessary, life-giving, inspiring, and controlling presuppositions of the further specification of any faith tradition into a form tradition. They also mediate foundational beliefs in the particular epiphanies of the formation mystery on which

the tradition is founded; they symbolize, mediate, form, facilitate, celebrate, and make people participate in these beliefs.

Faith directives underlie every faith tradition. The tradition symbolically transmit these directives which disclose and mediate the ultimate meanings of life and world and the overall or general orientation human life should take in consonance with these meanings. A faith tradition is seminal-formative; its normative sources contain the remote seeds of proximate form directives for the concrete formation of life. They contain the seeds of proximate form directives.

4. RELIGIOUS FAITH TRADITIONS: PLURALISM

All phenomena such as beginning, being and becoming are fundamentally mysterious. Fundamental reality resists the quantifying analysis of logical reason. People, events, and things in their coming into being, passing away, birth, growth, and death — everything belong to the realm of mystery. Not a single being is self-explanatory as being.

Because of this fundamental mysteriousness of all reality around and evoked by it, there has been in the heart of man, from time immemorial, a primordial sense of wonder, a core “disposition of awe.”¹⁸ Questions of awe and mystery never fade in the formation history of humanity. Awe or wonder as openness to the Mystery is considered to be the most original and highest possible immediacy of insight and revelation. The unfolding dispositions of wonder, admiration, openness, adoration, respect, reverence, abandonment or their deformations in mindless fascination, fanaticism, gushing adoration of heroes, slavish submission to impressive people — can only be explained on the basis of the admitted or refused predisposition. According to Van Kaam, there is a close relationship between the disposition of wonder and faith traditions (religious and ideological). In awe, we are concerned with the primordial formation question and not with any particular sense perceptible aspect of the formation field. The deepest formation question is the one about the mystery of formation. Nobody can reasonably deny that the ultimate nature and meaning of the formation processes in universe and humanity are a mystery. This primordial question which is inherent in the preformation of our trans-focal consciousness, enquires into the founding and forming mystery at work in all such appearances. What is at the heart of all these?

When, people even from primitive times, pay attention to the above formation questions, they may begin to evolve more elaborately and systematically certain basic beliefs (faith) and corresponding form directives (form) that become part of the questioning human spirit. Different people over the centuries and in different

situations, have developed a multiplicity of ways of coming into union with the mysterious Holy Otherness.

Their elaboration is influenced by the socio-historical dimension of their formation in time and space as expressed in their prevalent form traditions. Hence, these elaborations of awe and mystery do not appear in the same at all moments in the history of human formation. Various historical situations give rise to various modes of experiencing the mystery and its epiphanies. Their apprehension and appraisal, and the expression of their subsequent awe disposition, varies from utmost simplicity to complex differentiation. Each elaboration grew by means of a historical dialogue with the relatively unique formation fields in which they originated and slowly unfolded.

Thus we can trace the awe disposition from its expression in periods of primary experience of the cosmic epiphany of the mystery, through its transitional nuances, to its expression in periods of the experience of distinctively human and trans-human epiphanies of mystery. Such different experiences give rise to nuances in the elaboration of the disposition of apprehension and awe-filled appreciation of the formation mystery. Thus we have religious (cosmic and trans-cosmic) and ideological faith and form traditions. These traditions, according to Van Kaam, “embody in word and other symbols the formation wisdom-in-awe of generations. If adherents freely assent to them in faith, they are open to the potential or actual epiphanies of the formation mystery in their life and world.”¹⁹ They are living treasures of formation wisdom. Difference is due to the different nuances in their formation wisdom in response to the epiphanies of the mystery. Faith Traditions, thus, are “elaborations of awe and mystery” at various moments of history and in different situations. Each offers its own explanation or divinely inspired interpretations of the Mystery of Formation.

5. RELIGIOUS FAITH TRADITIONS: PURPOSE

The daily formation of life and world can only proceed effectively if we somehow abandon ourselves to this mystery, at least in some implicit, elementary faith, hope, and love. The basic human sense of awe implies, thus, not only holy dread and reverence but also dissonance, deficiency and distance in relation to the mystery. They contain stories of original innocence, being wounded with estrangement and of regaining consonance. Thus religious traditions develop diverse ways of regaining consonance, complementing or restoring deficient form potency, overcoming distance between the human life form and the mystery at its core and fostering a sense of appreciative abandonment to the mystery.

Understood in this way, religion or a faith tradition is not God; it is only a means or pathway to experience and respond to the Mystery of God. Faith traditions are means to reach God. They are not God. Instead of looking at it as a pathway with pointers and guiding lights, or as means, many religious people end up making the means as the end. They end up making idolatry of their own faith tradition and become fanatic and violent. Whenever we make idolatry out of anything in the given pathway, we get stuck and we become spiritually stunted. At the same time, we need to be committed to one path, instead of becoming eclectics; we must search into its foundations and then we will be able to recognize other fellow pilgrims walking along using other pathways. Those who are closer to God will experience a convergence of other pathways and those who are far from God will see only the difference and that the different pathways diverge; these are the ones who become fanatics, fight with those who are different and do violence in the name of religion. Authentic pilgrims will know how to use the pathway, how to move on and also how to move beyond. The primary task of authentic religious is to be seekers and not just followers. And therefore, Jesus said: “Ask . . . seek knock” (Lk 11:9).

Hence the purpose of religion is *Re-ligare*, which means that is a path to re-bind oneself again or to get oneself re-connected to God; the goal is to know, love, and finally to be united with the mystery of God.

6. RELIGIOUS FAITH TRADITIONS: COMMON FOUNDATIONS

All religious faith traditions base themselves on certain common foundations. They are: (1) there is a Mystery to life and world and this Mystery is gracious and benevolent; (2) there is a transcendent capacity in the humans to relate with this Mystery; (3) one can never know it all on his own and may require guidance; (4) one needs to make an appreciative abandonment which involves the renunciation of all rigid, fanatic and violent positioning.

All religious faith traditions have also their own corresponding “form traditions” expressed in their own symbols, myths, stories, rituals, mode of worship.²⁰ Every form tradition is intimately related to the corresponding faith tradition in which it is rooted. Form is sourced in faith; faith always seeks form in order to express itself. Concretely, every form tradition refers to a set of form directives that have been handed over from generation to generation in a specific culture, religion, or ideological movement; they give direction to the concrete receptive or creative formation of life and formation fields within that culture, religion, or ideology. Form traditions direct proximately the formational implementation of basic belief systems, contained in a faith tradition. These form traditions are concrete ways of

symbolizing, forming, facilitating, implementing and celebrating the above four-fold aspects of the truth in relation to the forming mystery.

Faith tradition imparts ultimate faith directives while form tradition teaches how to express them concretely and as such gives form directives. These form directives belong to the realm of concrete proximate living in consonance with the formation mystery as manifested in the full formation field. They are practical directives that disclose and mediate concrete ways in which foundational faith directives can be appropriated and implemented in one's life and world. They disclose how life should be formed concretely in order to implement value or faith directives in ongoing formation experience.

Form traditions and their underlying form directives are primarily concerned with the proximate formation effectiveness of a tradition; they are concerned with the practical effectiveness of formation customs, styles, exercises, communications, spiritualities, methods that have been developed and handed over by generations committed to the same religious or humanist faith tradition.

Every form tradition draws on two sources of form directives: one from the faith tradition and the other from the formation experiences that give rise to concrete demands, problems, and challenges from the field of formation and from dialogue with the findings of the differential sciences.

There can be no logical deduction from the philosophical tenets of the faith tradition to the concrete form tradition it generates, because a form tradition develops in ongoing dialogue with formation events, situations, and a particular temporality. Again, because of its practical orientation, a form tradition is more flexible and open to change in the light of proximate knowledge than a faith tradition.²¹

There is also another important aspect to be taken into account. One faith tradition itself can give rise to a variety of form traditions because of the unavoidable rootedness and the necessary limitations of the socio-historical dimension of human life in which people are born and raised. Human life form is socio-historical through and through, as are its formation fields and form traditions. A human life form can be considered as finite form potency bound to a finite formation field (the socio-historical limitation of each formation field in which people are born and raised). The human formation is a journey that is continuously in dialogue with new, finite socio-historical situations and its problems, circumscribed by limited time and space. Both the empirical human life form and its formation field are intrinsically differentiated in the concretely lived socio-historical, vital, functional,

and transcendent dimensions. Form traditions are a mirror of the endless possibilities of human life to give form to its transcendent faith and commitment. They express the inexhaustible variety of human expressions of form reception and donation within the always changing life situations.²²

Because of the handing down from generation to generation (faith/form directives) through a socio-historical process, there will be always dangers of rigidity, numbness, and conventionality as well as new nuances in their interpretations. Dissonant cultural accretions also may creep in to form traditions. Van Kaam writes: “At times dissonant accretions may turn popularized formation wisdom into a tradition that is a caricature of the wisdom-in-awe that was its origin. A special problem in this regard involves false, self-centered ideologies that are disguised as true expressions of consonant, classical form traditions.”²³ Customs can be vehicles of compassionate caring and also of social sin. One can never predict with certainty what nuances our form traditions may assume; nor can one foresee what new form traditions may emerge within a particular faith tradition. There exist always the mutual inter-forming interactions between and among traditions. Socio-historical dimension also influences the formation of the wisdom-in-awe disposition fostered by a specific tradition. Even those who critique the dominant form traditions necessarily do so in the context of such traditions and their consequences. Their opposition could not be understood without an understanding of the socio-historical context.

There could also be adherents in a faith/form tradition that may be inclined to use the ideals and principles of their tradition to disguise for themselves and others their own designs of self-indulgence, greed, power and oppression. Through exalted propaganda, excessive mass meetings and systematic silencing of those who differ, they may evoke awe-filled subservience to themselves and to their own subversive ideologies. Hence there had to be attempts towards refinement of form traditions that may “bring their adherents closer and closer to the truth, goodness, and beauty in which the formation mystery discloses itself via various historical epiphanies.”²⁴

7. CRITERIA OF CONSONANCE OF FORM TRADITIONS:

It may not be possible to appraise the consonant effect of a certain faith/form tradition. Only in the course of history, the consonance or dissonance of its formation wisdom is made manifest. Some questions can test the authenticity. Can the formation wisdom of these traditions be translated into concrete form of everyday life? Are such forms of life in tune with the formation mystery and its epiphanies? Do such traditions enhance the possibility for greatest number of people to live more consonant life — to live and die in inner and outer harmony

and equanimity? Are its directives relevant to the distinctively human aspirations? Do they bring their adherents closer and closer to goodness, truth and beauty which the Mystery of God manifests? Are the lives of their adherents more congenial, compatible, and compassionate? Do these forms foster inner peace, freedom, joy, and equanimity? Are there efforts for refinement of form traditions in order to purify them from dissonant accretions that are not distinctively human and also to make their directives of formation more life-enhancing and respectful of other forms of life? While being committed to one's own, is there also a respect for others that are different from one's own and also a sense of convergence among those who are authentically committed? Do its adherents live with an attitude of full-heartedness while distancing themselves from the "arrogance of those who know"? Do they manifest full heartedness with receptivity and openness?²⁵

8. CONCLUSION

In the context of the political and religious polarization that is happening in our country, we have been searching for a way in which one remains committed to one's own religious faith tradition while being open and respectful to those different from his/her own. The goal was to arrive at a true, and therefore, lasting peace in the midst of religious pluralism, complemented also by the wisdom that comes from scientific growth and development. One thing remains certain: All those who seek to live their spiritual lives authentically cannot escape from the burden of discerning the face of God through a harmonious human living, especially in the context of religious pluralism. In this process, it is not enough that one understands the tenets of one's own religion; we need to be tuned to the foundational wisdom common to all religions. To be committed to one's own and at the same time to respect the others'. We certainly need a wider horizon, moving beyond mere popular perceptions. A critical enquiry, openness and a search for the foundational is essential for authentic spiritual living; otherwise we will be hooked on to the trivial, the superficial, and the non-essential, leading to all forms of rigidity, fanaticism, mutual mistrust, rivalry, exclusion and violence.

Endnotes

¹ ARNOLD TOYNBEE – DAISAKU IKEDA, *Choose Life: A Dialogue*, London 2007, 283.

² In searching for this way, I am deeply indebted to the "Science of Foundational Human (Spiritual) Formation as developed by Adrian Van Kaam in his seven volume series of *Formative Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1983-1995). His multipronged and scientific approach to evolve "a universal ecumenical formation wisdom" will provide a discerning framework for those who live in the midst of multiple faith traditions of religious or ideological nature. The goal is to help them live their spiritual lives inter-religiously and harmoniously.

³ These images could be: the Tao for some; The Mystery of All That Is for others; Being: the Divine Will; the intimate presence of the Holy Other; the flow of created and uncreated energies; the abyss of Nothingness or simply the holy Otherness of God. These images could also be seen in more personal names of gods or deities in different religions.

⁴ Foundational theme tracing and elucidation of the basic principles that guide spiritual formation universally are intrinsic to the research methods as developed by Van Kaam.

⁵ ADRIAN VAN KAAM, *Human Formation: Vol. II., Formative Spirituality*, New York 1985, 201.

⁶ CAROLYN GRATTON, *The Art of Spiritual Guidance*, New York 1993, 22.

⁷ Please refer, FRITJOF CAPRA, *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*, New York 1977; also *The Turning Point*, New York 1982); Some of these thinkers and scholars of our times are: Heisenberg, N. Bohr, Einstein, Capra, de Chardin and Prigogine..

⁸ “Formation exists; it goes on all the time. We see its manifestations all around us continuously: People are born, people die; in between they grow, age, and change inwardly and outwardly in countless ways. The history, cultures, and form traditions they share are in constant flux. The changes that we observe in nature are also undeniable. So, too, are the dynamic changes that scientists observe in the micro and macrocosmic universe. That formation goes on is thus no mystery for us. What formation means — how and why it goes on — is the mystery.” VAN KAAM, *Fundamental Formation Vol. I., Formative Spirituality*, New York 1983, 185.

⁹ Sufi mystics have a story that point to this reality. It seems that once there were some fish that spent their days of swimming around in search of water. Anxiously looking for their destination, they shared their worries and concerns with one another as they swam. One day they met a wise fish and asked him the question that preoccupied them for so long. “Where is the sea?” The wise fish answered: “If you would stop swimming so busily and struggling so anxiously, you would discover that you are already in the sea. You need to look no further than where you already are.”

¹⁰ VAN KAAM, *Fundamental Formation*, 185.

¹¹ VAN KAAM, *Fundamental Formation*, 187.

¹² See also IBID., 185-242. Also VAN KAAM, *Formation of the Human Heart: Vol. III., Formative Spirituality*, New York 1986, 31-51.

¹³ TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *The Divine Milieu*, New York 1960, 89.

¹⁴ It must be noted that faith tradition can be both religious and ideological. While religious traditions places the faith in the Mystery of a Divine Other, in ideological traditions, faith refers to the ideological conviction that a certain undeniable aspect of human life is the most important and exalts it as the most basic in the light of which all other formation aspects are to be understood exclusively. See VAN KAAM, *Human Formation*, 207-217. Van Kaam has made a very significant contribution to the reflection on religion as faith/form tradition. For more on faith and form traditions, see ADRIAN VAN KAAM, *Human Formation*, Chaps, 12 & 14. Also see YVES M. CONGAR, *Tradition and Traditions*, London 1966.

¹⁵ What makes human beings distinctively and uniquely human is the SPIRIT, which is the capacity for the “more than,” capacity for “transcendence.” Hence the faith traditions directly address and appeal to the human spirit, giving it varied explanations and images of the transcendent mystery.

¹⁶ VAN KAAM, *Fundamental Formation*, 221. For more about this crucial faith option, read 221-242 of the same. This primordial abandonment option is not totally free as this freedom of choice can be limited by various factors (222-223).

¹⁷ GRATTON, *The Art of Spiritual Guidance*, 22.

¹⁸ VAN KAAM, *Human Formation*, 177. For a detailed explanation, please read Chapters 10 and 11 of the same book.

¹⁹ VAN KAAM, *Human Formation*, 197.

²⁰ It must be noted that every religious tradition exists as both faith and form tradition and they cannot be separated. It is simply because beliefs are best carried, not by sacred scriptures or by theological doctrines but by customs; ways of doing and of being. In all great faith traditions of East and West, we can find in oral, or written forms a gathering of a set of customs or practices that reflect the ways of putting in to practice what people believe in relation to the Mystery that they encounter. Faith expressed in everyday, actual life is form. Form is sourced in faith. Faith always seeks form in order to express itself. Form appropriates and incarnates the faith dimension; we cannot separate it. Everything goes into spirituality if it cuts itself off from sound doctrines or contents of faith. Therefore, every faith tradition generates “form tradition” in order that it becomes an inheritable reality. Faith tradition, when it is expressed and lived in a particular society and history is a form tradition. According to Van Kaam, each form tradition “grew by means of historical dialogue with the relatively unique formation fields in which they originated and slowly unfolded. Both founders and adherents had to establish concrete formation dispositions of their own. Such dispositions had to be effective answers to what was disclosed to them in their encounters with their formation fields. For example, the arena of formation for American Indians, Arabs, African tribes, Australian aborigines, Chinese, Japanese, Europeans, Asians differ in countless ways”: VAN KAAM, *Human Formation*, 203.

²¹ VAN KAAM, *Human Formation*, 198-197

²² VAN KAAM, *Human Formation*, 203-204

²³ VAN KAAM, *Human Formation*, 199. We must distinguish between between the “foundational” and “accretional” in a form tradition. What is foundational has a universal form directive validity, and that of the accretional is only relative.

²⁴ VAN KAAM, *Human Formation*, 204.

²⁵ VAN KAAM, *Human Formation*, 200-201.

RELIGIONS AS AGENTS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN INDIA

S. Vincent Anesthasiar, CMF

INTRODUCTION

It is not a new accusation that the world peace is disturbed by religions. The fundamental ideological factions in Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., are at war on the followers of other faiths. Are religions agents of social transformation in India?

Globally there is a move towards right wing ideologies. The emergence of Trump in USA, Duterte in the Philippines, Narendra Modi in India indicate this shift towards right wing. Also right wing religious factions like Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism, Hindu nationalists, ISIS seem to gain more support and expand their bases. The right wing religions are in close collaboration with right wing politics.

1. Political Spectrum of Left and Right

'Left wing and Right wing' are two heavy words originated from French revolution. The people who were loyal to king and religion (Christianity) were said to be Right and people who were supporters of revolution were said to be Left.

Left Wing/Liberals	Center	Right Wing/Conservatives
A welfare state; nationalization of the Economy	Economics	Capitalism; Economic freedom
Progressive; counter cultural Minorities have privileges and protection; Transnationalism	Society	Traditional; moralistic; Minorities do not have privileges but equal; defending national interests

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Left Wing/Liberals	Center	Right Wing/Conservatives
Separation of Religion and State	Religion	Support Religion and State

(<https://www.quora.com/What-are-right-wing-left-wing-and-centre-in-Indian-context>)

These right wing characters are seen in Indian society, religion and politics. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) works hand in glove with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal, Durga Vahini, etc. The people of Schedule Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST), the Muslims and the Christians are deprived of protection and are being attacked. The economic liberalism is in its peak.

2. Process in Religions

The religions cannot be categorically classified right or left. The religions are dynamic. They mutually influence the society and politics. Accordingly, they pass through certain stages. When the religions begin to serve political ends there had been always voice of protest from the religions. Accordingly, Lincoln Bruce in the book *Religion, Rebellion, Revolution* classifies the stages of religions as follows:¹

Religion of status quo: At this stage religion is used to justify the inequalities in the society. For example, during the period of colonization, the church blessed the army that went on invasion of foreign land. Vedic Hinduism justified the caste discrimination by its Varnashrama-dharma indoctrination.

Religion of resistance: This is a stage in which there is refusal from within the religion to accept the justification of social anomalies. Buddhism, Jainism, Sufism are born of such opposition to Vedic Hinduism. Religions of resistance do not recruit members from outside but confine themselves in particular socio religious milieu and encourage resistance. Leaders of resistance usually emerge from marginal intelligentsia.

Religion of revolution: Religions of resistance matures into religion of revolution. This happens when the socio political conditions worsen within the society and when a theory is articulated to deny the right of the dominant class/caste. At this stage, new members are recruited. The members are organized with an ideological clarity and strategy for action.

Religion of counter revolution: The ousted status quo religion attempts to revive and capture power.

3. Analysis of Vedic Hinduism

Romila Thapar says that Indo Aryans are migrants to India. Where as today the Indo Arians do not accept this. The official position of the government of India is that all those who are in India are migrants and there is no indigenous people in India.

The Arians entered gangetic basin c.1500 BC. They engaged war with the indigenous people and occupied their land. The children of the soil were subjugated. Rig Veda calls the natives *as ritual less inhuman Dasyu* who followed alien law (R.V. 10.22.8). This subjugation was justified by the *code of Manusmrithi* (170-150 BC). Manu says that Brahma created Brahmins from the head and he would learn; the Kshatriyas from shoulder and he would defend/fight, the Vaishyas from stomach and he would earn and the Sudras from the feet and he would serve (Manu 1:21). These four classes of people were Arians. The indigenous people were grouped as *Chandalas* (country doctors, mahout, fishers, carpenters, etc.). They should live outside the village — below the tree, in burial grounds, in hills. They should not use metal vessels; can own only dog and donkey; should use only jewels of iron and copper, and they should not be seen during the auspicious events (Manu 10:53).

Among the Indo Arians there was degradation of women. *Manusmrithi* justifies this saying that for women, decision has to be made either by father or by husband or by son (Manu 10:148); even if husband is immoral and frequents prostitute, the wife should consider him as god (Manu 19:14); women will go to heaven only by serving the husband (Manu 9:14).

In this period the Vaishyas, the traders were becoming rich. The growth of trade led to urbanisation. The kingdoms of Kosala, Magadha were on vogue. The evils of state powers — avarice, taxation, extortion — were becoming common. The tribal life was disintegrating. The tribal values of liberty, equality and fraternity were disappearing. There was a thirst to revive the tribal, classless community.

3.1 *Buddhism as an Agent of Social Transformation*

Buddha who was born in Sakya tribe and he emerged as a voice of protest. He wanted to revive the tribal collective. He encouraged people to go out of the rotten society and to form *Sanghas*. Sangha was a community modelled on the tribal collective. It was characterized by common holding of property, as against the private property, full equality and democracy. Buddha worked for equality of all. Anand, a Dalit was his first disciple. It was a sign of his social protest. The important invitation of Buddha to the followers was *Budham Sharanam Gachami*

(I take refuge in the enlightened), *Dhammam Sharanam Gachami* (I take refuge in the path of enlightenment), *Sangam Sharanam Gachami* (I take refuge in the community).

3.2 *Bhakti Movements*

The Bhakti movements were influential social reformation agents, in Hinduism. These have provided path of spirituality regardless of one's caste or gender. These movements originated in the eighth century in South India and spread towards North. The following are some of the Bhakti saints and their social protests:

Kabir (1440-1518): He was from a weaver family and a low caste artisan; he wished to *reform the religion off the rituals and social stratification*. Kabir believed that sacrifices were not necessary to reach God as He was close to all the people. The following is a poem on God speaking to human:

*O servant,
Where dost thou seek me;
Lo I am beside thee.
I'm neither in temple, nor in mosque;
I am neither in Kaaba (Mecca), nor in Kailash.
Neither I'm in rites and ceremonies,
nor in Yoga and renunciations.
If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see me;
thou shalt meet me in a moment of time*

Mirabai (1498-1546): Meera Bai was born in a Rajput royal family in Rajasthan. She was known for her fearless disregard for social and family conventions. She was critical of Vedic Hinduism. She advocated four services (4As) towards the poor: *Ahara* (food), *Abhaya* (shelter), *Aushada* (medicine) and *Akshsara* (education). She brushed aside all other rituals as irrelevant.

Sankaradeva (1449-1568): He was a scholar, poet, playwright, social-religious reformer and a figure of importance in the cultural and religious history of Assam. He wrote and taught in Assamese as against Sanskrit; he ordained disciples from all castes and promoted equality; he was against renunciation of life; advocated non-violence and mercy to all creatures.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539): He was educated by a Muslim, worked as a store keeper, was married and had children. He joined the Sufists in Punjab. In the 16th

century, the invading Muslims and Hindu princes were in war. Punjab was the battle ground. While the kings squandered the wealth in war and luxury, the people were suffering. It is in this context Guru Nanak proposed a new path to save Punjab and the people. He criticized the blind beliefs, the caste and rituals, external signs of penance, celibacy, austerity in Hinduism. He preached the oneness of God and equality of people. The collection of his teachings are called *Adi Granth*. Nanak and his followers were persecuted. So Guru Gobind Singh made them militant. He adopted five symbols for Sikhs (5Ks): *Kesh* (hair), *Kanga* (small comb), *Kara* (iron bangle), *Kirban* (dagger) and *Kacha* (underwear).

3.3 Tribal and Dalit Social Reformation Movements

The Tribals and Dalits are not Hindus. But the Government of India denies them of having a separate religious identity and try to domesticate them within Hindu fold. In the religions of Tribals and Dalits too, there was social protest.

The tribal movements in Jharkhand was a religious, social and cultural movement. This was against the alienation of land and culture. India's 80% mineral and 50% timber is from here. The land was being encroached by non-tribals for dams, irrigation projects, industry, etc. The tribals became tenants in their own land. On June 30, 1855 in the village of Bhognadih under the leadership of Seedo and Kanhu, ten thousand santhals took oath to fight against the British government and to form their own rule. This is known as *SantalHul*.²

Dalit Movement led by Mahatma Jotiba Phule (1827-1890) and Ambedkar (1891- 1956): The British made the citizens equal by law but not in reality. Jotiba Phule worked for the abolition of untouchability and the emancipation Dalits. In fact he was the one who used the name *Dalit*. He started the first school for Dalits in 1883. Ambedkar rejected Hinduism and said that he was born a Hindu but would not die a Hindu. He embraced Buddhism (as there was caste discrimination among Christians he did not want to be a Christian). He fought for social justice and collaborated with the Indian national congress but was betrayed by Gandhi and Congress.

Ezhava revolt by Sri Narayana Guru (1856-1928): He was born in Ezhava (untouchable) caste in Chempazhanchy in Kerala. The Ezhavas suffered untouchability. They had to stand 18 feet away from Nayar, 36 feet from Namboothri; the ladies were not allowed to cover their breasts; the men had to pay *beard tax* and the women *breast tax*; till 1856, they were sold as slaves; children were killed for sacrifice. As a protest against these, Sri Narayan Guru built temples

for Ezhavas. He himself became priest and called himself as *Siva of Ezhavas*. In the temple instead of idols, inscribed the words *Truth, Love, Mercy, Compassion*. To educate that God is in human, he placed in the sanctuary a *looking mirror*. He worked for caste abolition, and for emancipation of women. He joined the Vaikom temple entry along with E.V.R. Periyar.

4. India Faces Counter Revolution by Hindu Nationalists

There is a well planned attempts in India to revive the Vedic Hinduism with all its oppressive nature. One of the ways by which they want to realise this revival is by creating anger and negative feelings against Muslims, Christians, Communists and other secularists. The ultimate aim is to eliminate minorities and secular citizens from visibility and reduce them to a state of being slaves without rights, freedom and dignity, and if possible to obliterate them completely from India as they are obstacles to the creation of a monolithic Hindu *rashtra*. We shall analyse the treatment meted to the Christians and Muslims.

4.1 False Accusation of Fraudulent Conversion

There has been accusation of fraudulently converting the Hindus to Christianity. This allegation is made beginning with Mahatma Gandhi. He perceived the Christian schools as means of conversion. So he encouraged his followers to start Hindu schools wherever there were Christian schools. He said to the missionaries, “1. Give up conversion, 2. If you convert, direct your efforts to those who are in a position to assess your matters. 3. Even for converting let non-Indian missionaries go back. 4. While doing so, don’t despise the faith of people, and don’t denationalize them. 5. Instead of life of church, live the life of Jesus.”³ Similar accusations are made against the Muslims too.

The inter-religious dialogue engaged by the Catholics is considered as a cheat. Quoting *Lumen Gentium* no.16 (*Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience*), Arun Shourie, a long time BJP intelligentsia, says that the above statement looks attractive and seems to appreciate the possibility of salvation through other religions too. But in fact it is not. According to this no one, including Gandhi and Buddha can go to heaven. Because Buddha did not know Christ for no fault of his own, but did not seek God. He was as an atheist. Gandhi followed the dictates of his conscience, but did not get baptised even after knowing Christ.⁴ Arun Shourie poses the following questions: ‘Can the acknowledgement that salvation

is possible through other faiths become acceptance? When accepting, what is the ground for converting people to Christianity?⁵

Anti-Conversion laws have been passed in various states in India such as Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Jharkhand. A national anti-conversion law is on the political agenda of the BJP government. Pravin Togadia (President of VHP), has called for such law. Also he has demanded that the law should not prevent “reconversions” (*gharwapsi*) to Hinduism (Asia News, 21.01.2015).

4.2 Conversion Accusation is a Ploy to Attack the Minorities

There is no fraudulent mass conversion in India. The conversion issue is used as a chance to attack the religious minorities. The Muslims have been ruling India for 1000 years, from the rule of Muhammad ibn Quasim (712 AD) to Bahdur Shah (1712 AD). Among these Muslim rulers, except Aurangzeb, all others had been benevolent kings. If they were to converse forcefully, the Muslim population would have been much higher in India.

The *East India company* in India did not allow the missionaries in their territories. Later when the motion was passed in the British House of Commons to proselytize in India, the Missionaries were allowed. But the government remained neutral and in government schools no religion was taught. That is why the independence struggle of India was political and not religious.

The latest statistics of the governments in India show that the conversion accusation is baseless. As per the Census of India 2011, Hindus constitute 79.8% (966,257,353), Muslims 14.23% (172,245,158), Christians 2.3% (27,819,588), Sikhs 1.72% (20,833,116), Buddhists 0.7% (8,442,972), Jains 0.37% (4,451,753), and other religions including Parsis and Jews constitute 0.6% (7,937,734) of the 1,210,854,977 population in India⁶. There is no significant change in this data on Christian and Muslim population since the last census in 2001.

The statistics on conversion, released by government of Maharashtra in January 2018, says that in the past 43 months, 1,683 people have opted to change their religion in the state. They include 1,166 Hindus, 263 Muslims, 165 Christians, 53 Buddhists, 16 Sikhs, nine Jains, four Neo-Buddhists and 11 others.

Among these 165 Christians, 100 became Hindus, 47 took up Islam, 11 became Buddhists, five adopted Jainism and two became followers of Sikhism. In contrast, during the same period only 173 people joined to become Christians. While 138 Hindus joined Christian religion, 21 came from Islam and 14 from Buddhism

and Jainism⁷. These statistics prove that change of religion is a rare reality and it takes place among the religions transversally. So the accusation of Christians and Muslims fraudulently converting is wrong.

4.3 *Other Forms of Persecutions to Religious Minorities*

There are increased attacks against the Christians and Muslims. According to Amnesty International report, between 2017 April and June, at least ten Muslim men have been lynched or killed in public because of hate crimes. In 2017, there were 736 attacks against Christians, up from 348 in 2016. In such cases of violence, even the judiciary is discriminatory against the minorities. When Collin Gonsalves, the lawyer representing the case of the victims of Orissa anti-Christian violence approached the Supreme court of India for compensation for the victims, a judge of the Supreme court has said that the “Christians get a lot of foreign funds and therefore government was not obliged to give them compensation for the damages to their properties”.⁸

The Indian Government denied entry into the country for Archbishop Arthur Roche and Archbishop Protase Rugambwa who were to attend the meeting of CBCI in Bangalore in February 3-9, 2015. There is stringent monitoring of civil society organizations which receive foreign donations in India. Sikhs are forced to accept that Sikhism is not a distinct religion; Beef is regularly consumed by all people and yet the present government has sought to prohibit slaughter of cows, possession and consumption of beef through state legislations. Various cow protection (*gaurakshaks*) / Hindu vigilante groups “implement” this law by publicly humiliating, brutally attacking (and sometimes killing) those suspected of possessing / consuming beef or slaughtering cows / calves. The Ramayana and the Gita should be taught in schools, according to union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma (Story pick, 11.9.2015). The Good Friday is not holiday anymore (The Hindu, 16.3.2016).

There is conscious effort to paint a picture that Christians are close to anti national groups. RSS alleges that the Christian Churches are funding the Maoists groups in India. Linking Maoists with the Church, the RSS functionary Indresh Kumar has cynically raised the question why the Maoists do not attack the Christian institution? (The Times of India, 15.11.2015).

The ultimate aim of right wing Hindu outfits is to create Hindu India. Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) patron Ashok Singhal said, “India will become a Hindu nation by 2020 and the entire world would be Hindu by 2030” (The Indian Express, 20.7.2015).

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) aspires to win 2019 election with majority and establish a de facto single-party government. If this is realised, then the constitutional changes will follow to form Hindustan (Hindu India). In Hindustan, there will not be space for democratic process; the civic spaces will be taken over by Hindu fundamental mob; there will be economic totalitarianism which is already gaining ground. In this new India, there will be violation of human rights against the Dalits, Tribals, religious minorities and particularly against women. They have begun to achieve the Hindu nation through the means of terror and violence. Because of this, in 2015 India has ranked fourth in the world after Syria, Nigeria and Iraq having the highest social hostilities involving religion, according to Pew Research Centre (The Economic Times, 27.2.2015). The BJP government is silent on the activities of the Hindu fundamentals and collaborates with their agenda. Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue observed that Christianity is the most persecuted religious group on the planet (Vatican insider World News, 30.07.2015) and Pope Francis says that the Church of today is Church of martyrs (Vatican Radio, 21.4.2015). These statements are very true to the Indian Church.

5. Social Transformation by the Church

It is self assuring to recall the contribution of the Christians towards the transformation of India despite the persecutions. This makes us proud of being part of this Church despite the persecutions.

Democratization of education, specially the female literacy and education to tribes and Dalits: Today 40% of the education providers are Christians. India aspires for a superpower status in the globalized world for which missionaries have sown the seed more than two hundred years ago.

Literature development: The printing was introduced by Zigenbalg for printing Bible in Tamil. Then followed the printing of literature. Also the missionaries wrote grammar and produced dictionaries for several languages like Tamil, Bengali, etc.

Women emancipation: The missionaries were source of inspiration for the abolition of Sati in 1829 by William Bentick the British Viceroy of India and Amy Carmichael a missionary worked for the abolition of *devadasi* tradition. She started protecting such girls by adopting them and caring for them. In some parts of the country, women were not allowed to wear their upper garments. *Upper cloth revolts* happened thrice between the years 1822-1856 because of the initiatives of missionaries.

Medical mission: Mission hospitals were started in several districts in the country. Ida Scudder who witnessed the death of pregnant women, who were refused by their husbands to be treated by men doctors, in 1893 founded the hospital for women that grew to be one of the best hospitals in India – *Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore*. Centres for curing leprosy, TB, mental illness and for the care of the handicapped were made available.

Relief during the Famines: Famines ravaged much of India from 1870–1920. Feeding the hungry, taking care of children who were orphaned by famines, providing opportunity for skill training were done during famines.

Fighting the exploitation: Fr. Levins fought the land related case of the tribals in the courts and got their land back. In the emancipation of the untouchables, the Church has done a great service.

Missionaries have contributed numerous rehabilitation centres, homes for the aged, infants, technical institutions, agricultural institutes (Allahabad Agricultural Institute was by missionaries).

6. Church as Agent of Social Transformation in the Future

The Church had been present in the grass roots curing the ailing roots of Indian society. Now it has to add up net working to its mission ambience. The Church used to say that there was *No Salvation outside the church*. Now the Church has to see its presence wherever the works of liberation are being carried out. The salvation becomes central and not the Church. So there is *No church outside the Salvation*. Now the Church has to look up to survey the works of salvation happening around and come forward to join hands with them. The following can be certain aspects of this mission.

6.1 The Hindu Community in General is Good

“The Hindu community in general is so loving and welcoming. When Christianity came to India in AD 52, these are the people who received the Gospel. Therefore, they have that inherent quality of receiving good things from others,” says Cardinal Baselios Cleemis, the President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (Catholic Daily, 27.6.2016). This is a good inspiration. The vast majority of the Hindus are good and humane. We have to become appreciative of the tolerance and openness present in India. We should not become hate mongers. The *Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC)* discouraging the practice of Yoga (India Today, 7.6. 2016) is not commendable gesture. Instead we have to identify the

positive forces among the culture and people of India. No good Indian wants the country to be destroyed by fundamentalists, fascists and fanatics. There are galaxies of noble Hindus who do not subscribe to the Hindutva ideology.

Pushpa Mitra Bhargava, the Founder Director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, returned in 2015, the *Padma Bhusan* award given to him in 1986, in protest against the growing intolerance in the country. Sadly, he has died on 01.08.2017.

Indian writers returned the *Sahitya Akademi* awards in 2015 against the climate of intolerance in the country.

Some of the leading film directors, celebrities and activists including the former Chief of the Indian Navy, Admiral L. Ramdas joined this chorus of protest.

Romila Thapar (most celebrated historian) at a recent conference in New Delhi has lamented that the country is rapidly, and inexorably, moving towards an 'excluding' nationalism. This is at lamentable variance with India's nationalist struggle which was, in all essentials, anti-colonial in orientation and assimilative in character.⁹

6.2 Macro Ecumenical Political Movements

The Bhakti movements could not realize lasting impact on the socio-political and economic life of the people. Its impact was limited to the realm of worship and rituals. *The tribal and Dalit movements* could not succeed, until it took a political shape. Similarly, we have to identify the people and movements that stand for the values of the kingdom and create a political movement. The Vatican document *Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission* by the then Secretariat for Non-Christians, published in 1984, lays the foundation for the dialogue as mission. It observes, "working for the extension of the Kingdom of God and its values among all men and women is a practical dialogue. Jesus becomes an example in doing this dialogue mission with full respect to human person. Jesus broke the racial boundaries. He identified more with Samaritans than with Priest and Levite; he was concerned more with the liberation of the poor than temple worship; he was drawn more by the sinners than by the self righteous; he was with those who did the will of God than those said Lord Lord" (cf. numbers 11-18). Doing mission with those who do the will of God can be called as *Macro ecumenical approach*. Jesus is model for Macro ecumenism. After the model of Jesus all the people of good will have to work together.

6.3 *Awareness Creation*

Lack of consciousness of the lurking danger of the Hindutva ideology seems to be the greatest tragedy of the Indian psyche. Because of this, many minority religions and secular organisations in India are still dormant and not united against the common enemy of India. Hence it is the duty of all right thinking persons to defeat the dark forces of Hindutva through nothing less than a fierce non-violent battle. The Hindutva ideology has to be countered through all aspects of civilised life: through educational institutions, the print and the electronic media, through mass movements, through unified action of political parties and civil society organisations. The pressure has to be levied from the grass root as well as from international communities.

6.4 *Political Participation in the Missing Middle*

The Church is present in the grass root of the society. Also the Church is engaged with the elite organization like UNO through high level talks, conferences, symposia, etc. But the presence of the Christians and the noble citizens in the legislature and parliament is very minimal. The vacuum in this Missing Middle has to draw our attention. We have to encourage participation of people in politics. The pastoral agents, specially women, have to be trained for this type of political participation. It is through this *the institutionalization of Christian charity* that the political changes can be effected.

Conclusion: Harmony a Possibility

‘Abdul Raheem, an Afghan soldier who lost both his hands in war, received a pair of hands from Joseph of Kerala who had suffered brain death. The transplant surgery was done by Dr. Subramanian Iyer of the Amrita Hospital, Kerala (NDTV 24x7, 17.5.2016). This event offers hope for the promotion of unity in the country. This event is a synergy made possible by a Muslim, a Christian and a Hindu. At the level of heart, all are human with passion and love. This humanity has to be nurtured.

The international community shows that such peace and unity is becoming more and more a possibility today. The world with its 7 billion people, 8000 nations, 193 sovereign states is becoming increasingly peaceful. In the last 25 years, there are no nuclear wars and navel battles. The conflicts are restricted to certain zones like Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo. This peace is made possible because of the hard work of the peace building institutions such as UNO, UNHCR, NATO, EU, Pax Christi International, Caritas International, the

Dicastery for Integral Human Development of Holy See and various other secular movements. We can say that peace is breaking out where wars were breaking out. Unity of people is the only way in which India can live. As former USA President Barack Obama said during his visit to India, “India would not succeed if it splintered along religious lines” (News 24, 27.1.2015). The Indian Church can become an agent of peace and transformation.

Endnotes

¹ Cf. LINCOLN BRUCE, *Religion, Rebellion, Revolution*, London 1985.

² “A Brief History of Santal Hul of 1855” [access: 28.05.2018], livelystories.com/2017/06/a-brief-history-of-santal-hul-of-1855/.

³ ARUN SHOURIE, *Missionaries in India, Continuities, Changes and Dilemmas*, New Delhi 1994, 32.

⁴ ARUN SHOURIE, *Missionaries in India, Continuities, Changes and Dilemmas*, 216.

⁵ ARUN SHOURIE, *Missionaries in India, Continuities, Changes and Dilemmas*, 229-230.

⁶ “All India Religion Census Data 2011” [access: 23.01.2018], <http://www.census2011.co.in/religion.php>

⁷ “Indian state’s data debunks myth about Christian conversions” [access: 05.06.2018], <http://india.ucanews.com/news/indian-states-data-debunks-myth-about-christian-conversions/36455/daily>).

⁸ DOMINIC EMMANUEL, “Freedom of Conscience in the context of Anti-conversion Laws: A Perspective from South Asia”, *The Universal News Network* (2016).

⁹ KartikMaini, “RomilaThapar: Hindutva is redefining heritage through its ‘excluding’ nationalism, flawed conceptions of history” [access: 08.06.2018], <https://www.firstpost.com/living/romila-thapar-hindutva-is-redefining-heritage-through-its-excluding-nationalism-flawed-conceptions-of-history-4415309.html>

THE MISSION OF JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION (JPIC) TOWARDS NATION-BUILDING

S. Vincent Anesthasiar, CMF

INTRODUCTION

The spirit of God that hovered over the waters in the beginning of the creation continues to recreate the world today. All forms of life come from God bearing the DNA of God. So, everything is sacred. The earth and its resources can be used only by those who tend them. If anyone uses without caring then it amounts to robbery. With eyes of faith and with the eyes of God, we have to read the signs seen in the socio-economic and political megatrends of Indian land and people. “We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics” (GS 4). The spirit of God invites us to read these signs and to give adequate response.

Pope Paul VI after establishing the *Committee on Justice and Peace* addressed for the first time on April 20, 1967. He said, “Today, as in the past, once the construction of a Church or bell tower is finished, a rooster is placed on top as a symbol of vigilance, for the faith and for the entire program of Christian life. In similar fashion, this Committee has been placed on top of the spiritual building of the Council (Vatican Council II), and its mission is none other than that of *keeping the eyes of the Church open, its heart sensitive and its hand prepared* for the work of charity”. To create Justice and peace, the committee was the final resolution of Vatican II (GS 90). This committee is an expression that the Church is keen to share the “the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted” (GS 1).

Fr. S. Vincent Anesthasiar is a Claretian Missionary from the Province of Chennai born at Karangadu, in the district of Sivagangai, Tamil Nadu. He served the province in different capacities like formator, superior, educator, director and social worker. For many years, he directed the mission of the Province of Chennai being the Prefect of the Apostolate. He also served the province as the Provincial Superior for six years. At present, he is pursuing doctorate on the problem of fishing in Palk Bay (the part of the sea which is between Sri Lanka and India). Presently he serves as General In charge of JPIC, Rome.

From January 1, 2017 the Committee for Justice and Peace has become part of *The Dicastery for promoting Integral Human Development*. One of its works is to ‘gather and evaluate the information and results of investigations on the social issues, and updating the episcopal organisms’.¹ So as Religious, we need to read the signs of the world, be affected by the sufferings of the world and prepare the hands for works of *charity/political charity* to liberate the people. This paper is aimed to critically review briefly the Indian scenario from Christian-Missionary perspectives and to indicate the directions towards nation building.

1. Indian Context

1.1 Society

According to the 2011 census, India has a population of 1,210,854,977. It makes 18% of the world population (7.6 billion). India is home to about 700 tribal groups with a population of 104 million. These indigenous people constitute the second largest tribal population in the world after Africa. There are 200 million people belonging to various scheduled castes in the country. World’s largest youth population is in India but their potential is not utilised. Over 30% of India’s youth are NEETs (Not Employed, Educated or Trained in skills).

It is a cradle of the major religions and spiritual traditions apart from the traditional or tribal religions. Its culture and ethos are the result of the influence of these spiritual traditions, not Hinduism alone. The tribal religions are close to all forms of life and approach the planet and people with reverence. The people of India take pride in their religious and cultural values. “All of these indicate an innate spiritual insight and moral wisdom in the Asian soul, and it is the core around which a growing sense of “being Asian” is built.” (*Ecclesia in Asia 6*).

India is under the sway of Post modernism. Post modern culture doubts everything; holds the truth as relative; considers traditional wisdom as outdated. The Indian families suffer more divorce due to the influence of post modernism.

2.1 Schedule Tribes

Tribal people of India is said to form three major groups. The first consists of populations Austro-Asiatic who are found in Central India. The late Professor Nihar Ranjan Ray says that Austro-Asiatic have pre-dated the Dravidians, the Aryans and whoever else settled in this country. The anthropologist Dr Verrier Elwin says, “These are the *real swadeshi products* of India, in whose presence all others are foreign”. (To the swadeshi products, we have to add the Dalits who are

progenies of Indus valley civilisation). The other two groupings are the Caucasoid and Sino-Tibetan/Mongoloid tribal people of the Himalayan and North Eastern regions who migrated in later periods.

The natives of this country have become aliens in their own land. From the time of British rule, their lands are alienated from them for exploiting natural resources. Forest land and its resources provide subsistence and when outsiders exploit the tribe land, the natural life cycle of tribal ecology and tribal life is greatly disturbed. Among the 60 million displaced people, 40% are Tribals.

Most of them live under abject poverty and are in debt in the hands of local moneylenders and *Zamindars*. In order to repay the debt, they often mortgage or sell their land to the moneylenders. In many parts of India, tribal population suffers from chronic infections and diseases out of which water borne diseases are life-threatening. The ecological imbalance like cutting of trees is source of these diseases.

The average literacy of India is as per Census 2011 is 73% but for Schedules Tribe is 59% only. Most of the tribes are located in interior and remote areas where teachers would not like to go from outside.

Due to contact with other cultures, the tribal culture is undergoing a revolutionary change. They are losing their culture and language.

Jaipal Singh Munda (1903-1970), a member of Constituent Assembly observed on 16.12. 1946, "As a jungli, as an Adivasi, I am not expected to understand the legal intricacies of the (constitutional) resolution. But my common sense tells me that every one of us should march in that road to freedom and fight together. Sir, if there is any group of Indian people that has been shabbily treated, it is my people. They have been disgracefully treated, neglected for the last 6,000 years. The history of the Indus Valley civilization, a child of which I am, shows quite clearly that it is the new comers — most of you here are intruders as far as I am concerned — it is the new comers who have driven away my people from the Indus Valley to the jungle fastness. Yet I take Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru at his word. I take you all at your word that now we are going to start a new chapter, a new chapter of independent India where there is equality of opportunity, where no one would be neglected."²

Is he right in believing the words of Nehru? The Naxalites have provided the Adivasis some protection, but ultimately the suffering of the tribal people has only increased. The media is mostly silent on their plight.

2.1.2 Schedule Caste (Dalit)

For the reflection on the schedule caste, the information by the Church is used for the purpose of indicating the plight of Christian Dalits. The Dalits suffer like Tribals. In addition, they suffer untouchability. The document of Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) says, 'At every 18 minutes, a crime is committed against a Dalit. Every day, 3 Dalit women are raped, 2 Dalits are murdered, 11 are beaten, and 2 Dalit houses are burnt. Between 2007 to 2012 every week 13 Dalits were murdered, 6 were kidnaped or abducted and 5 Dalit houses or possessions were burnt (Policy of Dalit Empowerment in the Catholic Church in India, CBCI, December 13, 2016, no.10).

On 27.7.2017 in a UP village, the caste Hindu fascists punished the Dalit lovers for loving. They were made nude and paraded naked carrying each other on shoulder. The video of it was viral on the social media.

The UNCAN news of 9.10.2017 reports, 'A 17-year-old Dalit boy was stabbed on October 3, 2017 for sporting a moustache in Limbodara village in Gujarat. In unwritten social norms imposed by people from upper caste groups in the area, Dalit men are not supposed to grow moustaches and twirl it. On 7.10.2017, a Dalit youth was beaten to death for watching a folk dance at a temple in Borsad village of the same state. The event was organized by people belonging to the upper caste.'³

The fate of Christian Dalits is worse than that of Hindu Dalits. To escape from the caste atrocities only the Dalits embraced Christianity. But the change of religion has not given them social status and security of life; apart from being ill treated by the society, they are discriminated within the Church too.

When the Portuguese arrived India around 1500 AD, they started the earliest conversion in Goa mainly with the Brahmin Community and some other dominant castes. Those days, the missionaries hoped that conversion of the dominant castes would automatically attract the lower castes to Christianity. But this did not happen. In fact, the Brahmin and dominant caste converts vehemently opposed the conversion of Dalits and other oppressed castes to Christianity. The foreign missionaries in fact, accommodated castes, assuming that caste was only cultural characteristic of the Indian society. In 1571 for first time in Pallurithy separate Mass was arranged for the Dalits. The Thomas Christians celebrated Christmas on 25th December and Latin Christians (mostly Dalits) were allowed to celebrate on 26th December. Dalits were not admitted to priesthood. The Fifth provincial Council of Goa held in 1606 said, "For the dignity of the priesthood, and respect due to ecclesiastic positions, low castes should not be admitted to religious Orders."⁴ There

were separate group of missionaries to work with Dalits and non Dalits, separate Churches, separate burial grounds throughout the country. The issue of caste and conversion was reported to Holy See. Pope Gregory XV by his Bull *Romana Sedis Antistes*, dated 31.01.1623, conceded to the practice of missionaries accommodating caste practices within the Catholic Church.

The protestant churches too initially tolerated caste practices. But they found that caste discrimination was becoming stronger within the church. Hence in the year 1858, missionaries came together and resolved against caste in the church, “caste is the monster evil of India. It is the duty of all missionaries to spare no pains, to denounce the wickedness of caste. No man should be regarded as worthy of the name of Christians who refuses to renounce caste and to remove all its outward marks.”⁵ This is the reason, though India was under British rule, the total protestant population in India is only 9 million where as the Catholics are 19 million. Among these 19 million the Dalits form 12 million.

The Minto-Morley Committee (appointed by British Government) had provided separate electorate for the Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Dalits to elect their representatives to the Legislature and Parliament so that their representatives could speak for them and safeguard their rights. The Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935 was passed to this effect.

When the Indian Constitution was being prepared, the Christian representatives (Fr. Jerome D’souza SJ and HC Mookerjee) in the Constituent Assembly, did not want special privileges for the Dalit Christians. But they wanted minority rights to run educational institutions and the right to propagate the faith. The Indian church got the minority rights (article 30 of Indian Constitution) and right to propagate faith (article 25) by giving up the rights of the Dalit Christians. When doing this, the Dalit Christians were not consulted. Consequently the Presidential Order of 1950 was promulgated and its Paragraph 3 says, “no person who professes a religion different from Hinduism, shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Castes (SC)”. Only those castes classified as scheduled castes are given protection against untouchability and privileges for education and employment. This law was amended twice to extend the SC status to Sikh Dalits and Buddhist Dalits. But Christian Dalits and Muslim Dalits, do not have constitutional protection. So today the Dalit Christians are discriminated by the society, by the church and by the government.

The discrimination does continue to this day in the Catholic Church

Late Archbishop M. Arokiasamy (Chairman of CBCI Commission for SC and ST) presented a report in 1989 to CBCI General Body which said, “In Tamil

Nadu, in the predominantly Christian villages, the Scheduled Caste (Harijan) colony is distinct and separate from the upper caste settlement. All the civic municipal amenities, such as the hospitals and schools are located in the area of caste Christians. The Church in the village is cruciform (cross shaped). Harijan Christians in some villages are required to confine themselves only to one wing of the house of God. Christians of Schedule Caste Origin (CSCO) are not allowed to assist the priest or read scriptural passages during Mass and not allowed to enter the sanctuary. They are also denied participation in the Church choir. When the sacraments such as baptism, confirmation and marriage are being administered, they have to receive them only after the upper caste Christians have received. They are being discriminated even in death as they are allotted different cemeteries or a corner of the same cemetery. In some places a wall separates their cemeteries.”

In Sivagangai Diocese (Tamil Nadu) Michael, a final year seminarian, was expelled from the seminary on August 13, 2011. He belongs to Pallar caste (Dalit) which constitutes 25.23% of Catholics in the diocese. But so far there is no priest from them though the diocese was formed in 1987. There was agitation from the Pallars demanding to ordain Michael. 15 parishes have been closed until a few months before. It was treated as disturbance to law and order and caste discrimination. The civic administration and the civic society involved in this.

A team under the leadership of A. Marx did an independent fact finding study on this problem and published the report on 14.9.2015. A Public hearing was conducted on 16.03.2017 headed by Mr. D. Hariparanthaman, a retired Judge of Madras High Court and the report was published on 08.02.2018. The findings of these two studies exactly repeat the 1989 report of Archbishop Arockiasamy.

D. Hariparanthaman’s report says that there are twenty forms of discriminations. Given below are only samples. While reading this, have the introspective question in mind ‘what would I have done if I had been in such situations?’

- Diocese Administration acts in a discriminatory manner in forming the new Parishes by confining more Dalit Christians in less Parishes and making more Parishes for Caste Christians with less members even without any substation.
- Dalit Christians are denied due participation in the administration of Parishes.
- Untouchability is practiced by providing separate Chapels for the Dalit Christians and Caste Christians living in the same Village.

- Parishes practice untouchability in not permitting Dalit Christians to Altar services.
- Separate cemeteries, denial of hearse van and refusing to conduct funeral service for Dalit Christians establish that Caste discrimination continues even after the death of Dalit Christians
- Diocese administration acts in a discriminatory manner against Dalit Christians by not providing facilities such as schools, colleges, hospitals and community halls as provided to Caste Christians.
- Diocese administration acts in a discriminatory manner against Dalit Christians by depriving similar opportunities in the matter of employment in the schools, colleges, etc. as provided to Caste Christians.
- Ever since the inception of Sivagangai Diocese in 1987, Pallar Dalit Christians are denied priesthood deliberately by the Diocese due to Caste discrimination.”⁶

2.2 Economy

India is a member of BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) which are considered as fast growing economies of the world. India is growing faster than any other large economy except China. By 2050, India's economy is projected to be the world's second-largest, behind only China.

India's growth is not inclusive. There is growing inequality. The development is like Oasis of richness in the ocean of poverty. India's richest 1% owned 36.8% of its wealth in 2000. Now this 1% own 53%. For comparison, the richest 1% in the United States own 37.3% of its wealth.⁷ India has one third of world's poorest, says World Bank.

Only 28% of Indian women are employed. India ranks 135th out of 144, on women's labour participation. Several leading companies in India's IT sector are planning for layoffs. This is due to the Trump administration's clampdown on H-1B visas; also the machine/robots like Sophia from Hanson Robotics,⁸ will replace human workers. Within a few years, up to half of the 3.9 million Indians currently working in the IT sector will become irrelevant.

India has been rated as the second most unequal country in the world after South Africa, according to a report by the Johannesburg-based company *New World Wealth*. One of the most important reasons for the increasing inequalities is the policy of neo-liberalism followed by India since 1991. It has handed the economy

of the state to national, multinational and transnational corporations. Corporations loot and plunder resources, displace the populations, damage the environment and exploit human labour. The worst sufferers are indigenous communities, the dalits and the tribals, the peasants and the farmers (Ambrose Pinto SJ, mattersindia.com, 23.12.2016).

Indian government's *Sagarmala, smart city projects* will make the county a desert. Under this project 415 ports will be constructed all along the coast for importing and exporting, of course minerals and fossil fuel. The total cost of the project is €100 billion. The concept comes from Atal Bihari Vajpayee (2003). Sagarmala was approved by the union cabinet on 25th March 2015. It was publicised by the Prime Minister on 14th April 216 at the Maritime India Summit 2016.

By this project, there are threats for the coastal communities and others: displacement of fishers, lose of traditional job of fishing and agriculture (due to fossil fuel, mining). Smart cities planned for entertainment and tourism will have impact on culture and environment.

2.3 A. How the fund is raised for these projects?

These projects are funded by Banks and financial companies. The catholic institutions have invested the money in these banks. While investing perhaps the question we have asked is about the rate of interest. We have to also know how our money would be further invested. Jesus came that the people may have life in abundance. We are promoters of life and our investment should not, unknowingly, go into financial companies which endanger life of planet and people.

Where our money should not reach:

- **Abortion:** Pharmaceutical companies/clinics which are potentially related to procuring abortion
- **Destruction of Environment:** Financial companies related to projects causing damage to the environment like dams, mines, etc with little regard for ecosystem
- **Human Right violations:** Financial institutions that affect indigenous people; that use violence (threats, intimidation, forced evacuation of people) in order to realize their business.
- **Violation of Labor Rights:** The companies that do not respect the standards set by ILO, like right to union, not employing child/forced/slave labor, maintaining gender equality etc.

- **Pornography:** Companies that invest in the production of pornography and agencies like television, telecommunication, internet, etc. who promote/transmit them.
- **Embryonic stem cell research**
- **Alcohol:** Producers of high proof alcohol (more than 15% vol.).
- **Business malpractices:** Companies that disregard business ethics (corruption, tax evasion)
- **Fossil fuel companies:** Coal, oil, gas
- **Gambling:** Casinos and production of articles related to gambling like lotteries, betting, etc.
- **Green Genetic technology:** Producers of genetically modified plants, seeds, animals
- **Nuclear power:** power plants and producers of their key components, uranium mining
- **Tobacco:** Producers tobacco products

2.4 Consumerism and Environment

In India, neo-liberalism (Globalisation) has brought in consumerism (insatiable desire to consume). Now the products, markets, finance and labour are transported within and outside the country. The local products are not consumed. There is stress on environment's raw materials, fossil fuel. The green house gases emitted by aircrafts deplete the ozone layer and, the emission and oil spill from the cargo ships pollute sea. Now there is more plastic in the sea than fish. Our food is made of genetically modified stuff. The industrial toxic waste has caused a lot of damage to the plants. Mountains/forests disappear. Consumerism has crept transversely into every aspect of life including the religious houses and of our chapels.

We have devastated the planet earth. We have changed the earth's chemistry, bio systems, geology and ozone layer. The aftermath of this ecological crisis is experienced mostly by poor and vulnerable people. But "we are not consumers. For most of humanity's existence, we were makers: we made our clothes, shelter, and education, we hunted and gathered our food. We are not addicts. I propose that most addictions come from our surrendering our real powers, that is, our powers of creativity".⁹

2.4.1 Global Warming and Geoengineering

The invention of steam engine by James Watt in 1784 accelerated the use of gas, oil and coal (fossil fuel). The burning of fuel causes emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂). The CO₂ increases the global temperature. At the era of industrial revolution (1784-1800) the temperature of the planet was 0.8° C lesser than the present temperature. For example the average temperature of Chennai (India) was 28° C then and whereas now it is 29.5° C.

The Paris Climate Agreement (came into force in November 2016) aims to limit the global temperature rise between 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial levels. To achieve this, the CO₂ emission has to be reduced. To control the temperature, the allowed carbon budget till the year 2100 is 2860 Giga Tonnes (Gt). But now the annual global CO₂ emission is 40 Gt. At this rate, the global carbon in 2100 will be 3320 Gt. This is a very alarming stage.

After the Paris agreement the nations have not taken any initiative to reduce the CO₂ emission; the worst is that the US has withdrawn its support for Paris Agreement on June 1, 2017. At this stage to address this climate problem, the scientists have come out with *Geoengineering/Climate engineering*, to fix mechanically, the climate issue.

2.4.2 Geoengineering (Climate Engineering)?

The volcanic eruptions pump the soot and Sulphur dioxide into the upper atmosphere. These prevent the sun rays coming to the earth. So the earth becomes cool. The volcanic eruptions are natural efforts of the earth to save itself. The scientists say that the humans can play the volcano; the aerosol particles and sulphur dioxide can be injected into the atmosphere mechanically to prevent the sun rays reaching the earth. This method is called Solar Radiation Management (SRM).

The nose filters the carbon in the air that is breathed. Similarly, study is also underway, to filter the the carbon which is in the air and to store them in the ground. Ocean fertilization is another method to remove the existing atmospheric carbon. In this method nutrients are spread in certain parts of ocean to increase the algal growth. In turn, the algal will intake the CO₂. When algal die and reach the sea bottom, the carbon in the algal gets deposited in the sea bed.

To reduce the carbon going into the atmosphere, experimentation is on to capture the carbon from the emitted smoke before it goes into atmosphere. Another method under study is to burn the firewood (biomass) in low oxygen condition so that the biomass becomes charcoal which can be powdered and mixed with soil.

Critique of Geoengineering

It is said that the SRM method is very expensive; it might require 100 billion Euros yearly. Once these methods are employed they cannot be stopped; stopping would adversely raise the temperature. Because of these manipulations, the oceans will become more acidic, and the skies will become subtly darker; rainfall patterns could be affected; the ozone layer can be affected.

2.4.3 Consumerism and Trafficking

The globalisation has created marginalisation in India. So there is migration of labourers from rural to urban and to other countries. The migrants lose their roots and become alien in the urban. There is also new urbanisation in vast barren lands, taking places at a great speed.

In these contexts of migration and urbanisation, women and girls are trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation, forced labour, sham marriages, etc. India serves as source, destination and transit country for trafficking in person.

Indian women are trafficked to the Middle East for commercial sexual exploitation. Indian migrants who migrate willingly every year to the Middle East and Europe for work also end up in human trafficking industry. The women and girls from Nepal and Bangladesh are trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) around 8,100 cases of trafficking were recorded in India in 2016. The data show around 23,000 victims of trafficking were rescued that year. This is only a tip of the iceberg, with the actual numbers of people trafficked being much higher.

The 2017 Trafficking in person report on India by US Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking In Persons says: “Dalits, members of tribal communities, religious minorities, and women and girls from excluded groups are the most vulnerable to trafficking. They are used in in brick kilns, rice mills, agriculture, and embroidery factories; some children are subjected to begging. Some girls are sold and forced to conceive and deliver babies for sale”.

2.5 Political Context

India is a secular state. This ideological clarity was based on pragmatic grounds. Hindus and Muslims, and other minorities, don't live in separately demarcated geographical areas, but together in the same village as neighbours. But this ideology-based pragmatism is being tested today because of electoral calculations. BJP and their ultra-right affiliates openly want a Hindu India. This heightens fears among

Muslims and minorities. In the last UP election, BJP did not give any ticket to Muslims. To convert the fear psychosis of Muslims into vote bank, BSP gave hundred tickets to Muslims.

The right wing fundamentalists want in India a partition of the mind as Hindu and Non Hindu, within the partitioned nation. Love Jihad is a coinage of Right wing to polarise the country in view of votes.

Any dissent by civil society against the right wing agenda is equated to sedition. The media is mute on this. Even the Left parties and social forces have failed to mount strong critique of BJP govt. Civil society, social movements and human rights activists have to challenge. We have to engage in public discussion whether a Religion based National State is valid for India. If India is to survive as a nation, the time has come for such insanity to stop. Politics of inclusion not exclusion, politics of love not hatred and politics of hope not fear is the way to save India.

2.5.1 Reflection on Globalism Vs. Nationalism

In India, the economy is globalised and politics is nationalised. We have reflected that this pattern has not delivered the paradise we have longed for. Globalised economy has brought curse. Human works can be taken by machines. Technology will continue to manipulate the nature, space, ocean and all forms of life. Since human can not handle all the data of scientific world, *Sophia* (robot) can do the work much better. So homo-sapiens will be lost in the world. India or any other nation has no say in it since there is no global governance system to take decision on the research and application of technology like geo engineering. So we have to globalise the politics. We need global authority. So we have to globalise the politics. We need global authority. This has been called by Pope John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra* (1961).

3. What can we do in the face of these socio, political and economic problems?

- ***Responsible Consumer:*** We have to consciously avoiding the consumeristic pattern of life.
- ***Education:*** We have to educate ourselves and others on the conditions of the vulnerable communities like Dalits and tribes, impacts globalised economy on the poor and the planet and the divisive politics under way now.
- ***Responsible citizens:*** We have to use responsibly the democratic spaces available to safeguard the rights of the vulnerable people (Religious minorities, Dalits, Tribes, women, children etc)

- **Advocacy:** We have to politicize our pastoral praxis. We need to politicize evangelization and evangelise the politics to transfer the power (political, knowledge, money) to the people. This needs net working with secular forces to create subaltern politics and to save the people and the land. Inter faith approach is needed in this advocacy.
- **Commitment to regular Contemplative Experience:** Our commitment to socio political mission requires deep inner engineering. Only for those who see the connectedness (of the universe and all forms of beings) in the heart, can be affected by the disconnectedness in the world outside. Those without this inner connectedness can make use of the natural calamities and human sufferings as opportunities for profiteering; the social works can be done to inflate the ego and to fill the pocket.

Conclusion

It is good to remind ourselves of the words of John the Baptist, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire” (cf. Mt 3,3-10). The axe is already at the root of the trees. We need to act now, and act in net work. Or else we cannot avert the fourth impending social, political and ecological crisis in India.

Endnotes

¹ Pope Francis, “Instituting the Dicastery for promoting Integral Human Development”, Apostolic Letter [Access: 12.05.2018], https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio_20160817_humanam-progressionem.html.

² “Adivasis: Indian Original Inhabitants Have Suffered the Most at its Hands”, Article found in online paper, Scroll.in [access: 12.05.2018], <https://scroll.in/article/773759/adivasis-indias-original-inhabitants-have-suffered-the-most-at-its-hands>

³ Ritu Sharma, “Indians Protest Attacks on Dalits for Sporting Mustaches”, UCAnews of 9th October 2017 [access: 13.05.2018], <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indians-protest-attacks-on-dalits-for-sporting-mustaches/80434>

⁴ F.R. THOMAZ, *The Socio-Linguistic Paradox of Goa*, Lisbon, 29.

⁵ JOHN MURDOCH, *The Indian Missionary Manual*, Madras 1864, 294-295.

⁶ Cf. TAMIL NADU UNTOUCHABILITY ERADICATION FRONT, *Dalit Christians Crucified*, Chennai 2018, 8-30.

⁷ ANDREW WRIGHT, “8 Things You Need to Know about Indian Economy” on 1st October 2017 [access: 02.05.2018], <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/10/eight-key-facts-about-indias-economy-in-2017>

⁸ THE ECONOMIC TIMES, “Everything to know about Sophia, the Audrey Hepburn-lookalike, first robo-citizen of the world, ET Online, 9th November 2017 [accesses: 03.05.2018], // economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/61575904.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

⁹ MATHEW FOX, *Original Blessing*, Augsburg 1983.

DIALOGUE AND RECONCILIATION: WAYS TO COUNTER RELIGIOUS POLARIZATION¹

Dr. A. Pushparajan

It is heartening to see that the *Sanyasa* Institute has deliberated upon a theme that is topical and radical. It is indeed laudable that they organized a three day seminar on how consecrated persons could give a critical response to the present day 'Politics of Exclusivity, Division and Intimidation' in India. The deliberations would go a long way in helping consecrated persons reflect on their commitment to consecrated life in a more meaningful way in the socio- political context of the country.

My contribution to the process, here, consists in dealing with two powerful tools which consecrated persons could avail themselves of in their attempt to counter religious polarization. They are 'Dialogue' and 'Reconciliation'. If the former is assumed to be an initiative to be taken up during peacetimes, the latter may very well be understood as a remedial initiative to be pursued after a communal conflict.

There are three parts in my paper; the first two are devoted to Dialogue. Part 1 deals with conceptual clarification of 'Dialogue' while Part 2 elaborates the theme of using Dialogue as a way to counter religious polarization. Part 3 deals with 'Reconciliation'.

After rendering 33 years of academic service as philosopher, teacher and researcher, Dr. A. Pusparajan formally retired in 2004, and is presently residing in Bengaluru, giving guest lectures in fields of his specialization. As a perceptive scholar, he is much sought after across the country and abroad. Has been serving as consulter in several Commissions of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India. Been Consulter to the Pontifical Council for Culture (1993-98), Invitee of the UN World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at New York (2000), a founding member of the Association of Christian Philosophers of India, a founding member of World Council of Religious Leaders at Bangkok (2002). Now, member of the Governing Board of the National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre, Bangalore (2010 -). A serious thinker and industrious researcher as he is, he has to his credit 450 papers presented in international and national seminars, symposia and Conferences and 330 articles published in professional Journals of Philosophy, Theology and Spirituality; has authored/edited over 32 books.

PART 1 DIALOGUE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

1.1 ‘Dialogue’ in Its Literal Sense

The term ‘dialogue’ is derived from a combination of two Greek words: *dia* (across) and *logos* (word). So, etymologically it means exchange of words (ideas) between two persons or simply a conversation between two or more persons.

However, not all conversations between two persons are called dialogue in a strict sense. Depending upon the varied contexts and purposes, there may be a variety of conversation between two persons, each designated with a specific term. To mention a few,

1. A conversation between two persons may be carried on merely as a time pass activity, without any specific aim or goal. (e.g. at the bus-stand, two persons waiting for a particular bus has inordinately delayed, enter into a casual conversation, just because they want to while away the time; there is no specific purpose in their conversation. This is popularly called **Gossip or Chitchat**, not dialogue.
2. A conversation may be time-bound and purposive, but the purpose is clearly to impart one’s knowledge/views to an ignorant person, such that one is keen on giving one’s ideas to the other in the manner of a ‘one way traffic’. This is called **Dialogical Teaching**. (Socrates’ methodological dialogue is a good example. He had clearly the goal of imparting his knowledge to the Sophist who does not have it. Here one is at the giving end, the other is at the receiving end. But apparently he engages himself in a ‘mutual’ conversation, apparently, because he posed certain questions to the other, thereby elicited answers from the other. Continuing this ‘dialogical’ method, Socrates was really keen on unravelling the other’s ignorance, making room for imparting ideas to the other. The aim is one-sided. Such a conversation, though upheld between two persons, is not called dialogue, but **Teaching**.
3. A conversation in which both the parties may be engaged as a two-way traffic, mutually giving and receiving ideas from each other. But each of the parties may entertain the sole goal of defeating the other or of winning over the other to one’s point of view. In that case, it would be called **Debate**, not dialogue.
4. A conversation may be upheld between two persons, really as a mutual exchange of ideas, as two-way traffic, and both may be eager not only to give but also take the ideas from the other, with no aim of ‘defeating’ the

other. But the goal may be purely clarification of a complex issue or a social theme, at the intellectual realm only, without any repercussion on oneself. Such a theoretical conversation which may not necessarily add to personal enrichment, would be called simply **Discussion**, not dialogue.

1.2 'Dialogue' in the Strict Sense

As opposed to all the types of conversations mentioned above, if there is a conversation between two people which is time bound, purposive, aimed not simply to impose one's ideas on the other but also to receive from the other, never to defeat the other's standpoint, but to learn from the other, not merely to arrive at simple intellectual clarity on a general issue, but to get a personal enrichment by sharing one's ideas with the other and by learning from the other's ideas, then it is strictly termed dialogue.

Dialogue in a strict sense may take place in different contexts and with different sorts of enrichments: human, societal, and religious. Accordingly they assume different forms. To mention a few:

1. **Human Dialogue** is that conversation which contributes to the enrichment of better relationship between one another through understanding one another's attitudes, emotions and volitions of the partners and become better humane persons. It comes nearly to the psychological counselling.
2. **Secular Dialogue** is that dialogue pursued with mostly non-believers in religion (agnostics or atheists, but good-willed persons who are honest, altruistic and self-sacrificing). Such dialogue would usually be aimed at creating a better world through removal of such social problems as hunger, illiteracy, poverty, water crisis, value crisis and so forth. Occasionally it may take up religious concerns like fanaticism, fundamentalism, etc. for consideration from the standpoint of social concerns.
3. **Religious Dialogue** is that dialogue which takes place between two religious persons who are eager to learn and to share one another's religious experiences, spiritual needs, aspirations, hopes and anxieties, beliefs and practices, with a view to getting enriched personally and mutually, then that dialogue is called a religious dialogue. It may take place between persons who belong to the same religion, or who belong to different religions.
4. **Interreligious Dialogue:** If a dialogue takes place between two persons belonging to different religions, never with the aim of imposing one's own ideas, much less wishing to defeat the other, but only with an interest to

exchange one another's religious experiences, spiritual needs, aspirations, hopes and anxieties and are eager to learn from and share with one another's religious experiences, methods, beliefs, worship forms and moral practices, etc., all with the sole aim of getting one's religious living enriched mutually, then that dialogue is called interreligious dialogue.

1.3 'Dialogue' in Christian Circles

It was the Second Vatican Council that introduced dialogue in the Church officially. More or less around the same time (the mid-20th century) the other Churches also began to make use of the term liberally in their respective communities and statements. In the Conciliar documents the word 'dialogue' indicates a relationship of solidarity and collaboration² with all human beings irrespective of their religious belief or even with people of no religious belief. This Conciliar usage of the term 'dialogue' is wider much wider than all the senses expounded above. Even though it includes 'conversation' yet the Christian use of the word dialogue means much more than the strict sense of dialogue.

In pursuance of the wider meaning of dialogue as Christian circles have come to use it, it is helpful to distinguish between four types of dialogue: of life, of common action, of intellectual exchange, and of spiritual experience.

1. **The Dialogue of Life** is the manner of living with an attitude of "concern, respect, and hospitality towards the other, leaving room for the other person's identity, his modes of expression, and his values".³ In other words it is the way of living in which people strive to live in an open and neighbourly spirit, to share their joys and sorrows, as well as their human problems and preoccupations.
2. **The Dialogue of Action** is the act of collaboration with others which Christians ought to engage themselves for confronting the problems of the world, and for goals of a humanitarian, social, economic, or political nature which are directed towards the liberation and advancement of mankind. The field of collaboration can be as wide as to "defend and promote together social justice, moral values, peace and liberty".⁴
3. **The Dialogue of Theological Experts** is that in which specialists of two different religions, each having one's own vision of the world which inspires one to action, which they share with others either "to confront, deepen, and enrich their respective religious heritages or to apply something of their expertise to the common problems".⁵ In this type of dialogue, the partners

come to mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's spiritual values and cultural categories and promote communion and fellowship among people.

4. ***The Dialogue of Religious Experience*** is sharing of experiences by persons who are deeply rooted in their own religious traditions of "prayer, contemplation, faith, and duty, as well as their expressions and ways of searching for the Absolute".⁶ This type of dialogue can be a mutual enrichment and fruitful cooperation for promoting and preserving the highest values and spiritual ideals of man and also to communicate to one another the reasons for their own faith. The profound differences between the faiths must be seen not as barriers for dialogue but rather be referred back in humility and confidence to God who "is greater than our heart".⁷

In sum, Church's use of the term 'dialogue' is twofold: (a) In a religiously pluralistic society dialogue means 'interreligious dialogue', and (b) In an a-religious society, which is predominantly occupied by non-believers, it means 'secular dialogue'. In both the cases, the term dialogue means much more than mere conversation between two persons or groups. It is a "way of life", contributing to "culture of dialogue" or "spirituality of dialogue". To put it in the words of S. Wesley Ariarajah:

Dialogue is more than conversations. It concerns the way we relate to one another in a multicultural and pluralistic societies and involves the disciplines that should inform and dictate our relationships. It seeks to bring out the pre-requisites for a real communication across barriers. It lays bare the preconditions often needed for communities to move beyond confrontation to a spirit of reconciliation.⁸

1.4 The Key Principles for Genuine Dialogue

From the analysis made above, it is hopefully clear that the term dialogue is used in the Christian circle for a new type of relationship in its encounter with religious plurality. It implies the following conditions.⁹

1. **Mutual Respect:**

Communication between two groups of people will be real and effective only if they have a basic respect for one another. In any pluralistic context, each community that wishes to speak must earn the right to be heard. Such a right to be heard is earned by the respect given to the community one seeks to relate to. Earning such respect comes through one's willingness to accept the 'otherness' of the others. In other words, "basic respect for plurality or of

other ways of being, believing and acting is at the heart of the spirituality of dialogue”.

2. **Listening and Learning**

If one wants to develop deeper respect for the other, not merely be satisfied with a superficial relationship, then one has to take pain to listen and learn about the other, its culture, and gain a reasonable knowledge of the structure and life of the other, the way relationships are exercised, the meaning and place of rites and rituals etc. It is only through such a long process of listening and learning that one could really nurture respect for the other, which in turn can lead one to effective communication with the other person/group or community and empathetic solidarity with the other.

3. **An Outsider's Role Is to Merely Facilitate Dialogue**

When a conflicting situation arises (meaning that groups or communities have become isolated and are in conflict with each other and the smooth relationship is broken), a third party may enter and may suggest what appears to them to be a perfect solution while the parties concerned may not accept and implement it. The attempted negotiation may become a place to which people bring their own grievances and demands and thereby become more and more antagonized rather than being reconciled. In such cases, outsider's role must be one of creating opportunities for both parties to have an informed understanding and appreciation of the reasons for the grievances of the other. In response to “respectful listening” people open themselves up and speak honestly about the issues at stake for them. This setting leads to genuine sharing of underlying fears, anxieties and reservations and thus real issues are brought to the surface and dealt with honestly.

4. **Prejudice to Be Removed by a New Experience of Dialogue**

Prejudice is a judgment which one has come to believe to be true, although it may not be true. It is formed at one historical moment and handed down sometimes through centuries and is accepted without actual knowledge. The problem with prejudice is that specific communities are looked at *en masse* and as static entities so much so that very little consideration of the internal diversity within the community and of the fact of development in the communities. It is like rust, which not only corrupts but also clings to the metal and is not easily removed. It is worst enemy of communication. It blocks or distorts actual communication.

Education to certain extent would remove prejudice, but the best way to prejudice is to enable, through inter-faith work, the prejudiced communities to come for actual meeting between people, and help them have empathetic listening to one another and thereby to have a new experience of each other.

PART 2 DIALOGUE: A WAY TO CONFRONT RELIGIOUS POLARIZATION

Having analyzed the varied shades of meaning of dialogue both in its strict sense of the term and the wider sense in which the Church has been making use of it since Vat. II, now we may explore how dialogue could be used by the religious people to counter religious polarization that we witness today in our society. In this Part we take up the issue of how to make use of dialogue as a way to confront the politics of division, exclusion and Polarization. In the first section we focus only on 'Interreligious Dialogue', while in the next section we will consider the viability of 'Secular Dialogue'.

2.1 Interreligious Dialogue to Confront Religious Polarization

Undoubtedly, diversity of cultures and religions is the hall mark of the Indian civilization. Life contexts in India have always been religiously pluralistic multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-regional.¹⁰ However there has been much concern about the increasing polarization, since the formation of *Rasthria Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) by Hedgewar in 1925, with a view to realizing the Savarkar's vision of Hindu nationalism (*Hindu Rashtra* on the basis of his *Hindutva* ideology already during the Freedom Struggle and got aggravated on account of Partition and the communal riots that erupted at the time of Independence of our country). But the designs of the RSS were banned by the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. So, the whole movement went underground, but did not die out. On the contrary, it was gaining power through its clandestine and systematic planning. Ever since the formation of *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP), the political wing of RSS, it has been openly working for its mono-cultural nationalism. Already when BJP succeeded to form NDA Government, at the centre, with Vajpayee as Prime Minister, it began to crop its ugly head in various aspects of Indian political life. Now when they have the absolute political power, they are bent upon implementing their goal. Today there is much concern about the increasing tension, marked also by violence wrought by the Hindu fanatics on Christian and Muslim communities in India over the issue of nationalism and patriotism. Thus, the tension between Hindus on the one hand and Muslims and Christians on the other has been marked by greater and more frequent violence. Undue accusations against the religious minorities and false propoganda against them have been raised day after day.

Against the background of tense situation of polarization, how could dialogue be pursued as a means of countering the menace? This is the issue we are concerned with, in this section of the paper. First of all, it must be noted that the basic issue over which the polarization has been projected is the issue of conversion.¹¹ Many Christians have dealt with the issue primarily as an issue of freedom of religion and of respecting the rights of people to remain, or to convert to, a religion of their choice. Their main argument is that their constitutional right to preach and propagate their faith and that others have an equally constitutional right to change from their native faith to Christianity.

On the contrary, the *Hindutvavaadys* do not see this issue as a matter of constitutional rights at all. They see it as an issue of national identity. They agree that Hinduism has been pluralistic religion from the very beginning, with several and sometimes even protestant strands of religious traditions within it. For instance, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism have come out of Hinduism and formed as full-blown religions and built up religious communities, but still within a Hindu umbrella. But, in the case of Christianity and Islam, they argue, conversion means, alienation of the converts from the culture and religious ethos of India and that these two religions in the nature of the presentation, their message challenge the validity of Hinduism and other religious traditions of Indian origin. They also argue further that this sense of alienation is strengthened by the fact that both Islam and postcolonial Christianity in India arrived with invaders. They are also troubled by the fact that these two communities still have strong financial ties with the corresponding religious groups in lands that conquered India in the past.

The Indian Christians and Muslims in India, for their part, see themselves as true Indians. Despite the differences in religious beliefs, they claim, they are patriotic to the country. They see no contradiction between their loyalty to the land and their religious identity. The call by Hindu nationalist to the minorities to become culturally Hindus is therefore grossly misunderstood as a call to be absorbed into Hinduism. While from the Hindu side it is a call to become genuinely Indian in character and ethos, and to play the conversion game within the rules of the Indian tradition of mutual respect, the minorities see it as a threat to their very identity.

Thus we see a definite misapprehension of the claims of the two parties because of the unawareness of the assumptions at work. So, fundamentally what is needed is to accept that relationship does not mean maintaining of relations with others but the capacity to see issues as others see them. It has to do with the sensitivity that what we say might be received differently, not because of hostility or ill will, but because it is heard within a different context. Here, from the Hindu perspective

the issue has little to do with freedom of religion or the rights of people to have a religion of their choice. Rather it concerns the assumptions and outcomes in the practice of conversion.

Unless a “culture of dialogue” is created first as the milieu of communication, and unless the “spirit of dialogue” rules the methods of communication, there will be no real understanding of the religious and cultural moorings of peoples, and therefore communications will break down, and confusion and conflict will continue to persist.

If one wants to put an end to conflicts, and cut the roots of polarizations, it is imperative that we work at creating the culture of dialogue in which one does not enter into dialogue with the other with the intent of imposing one’s claims, much less of defeating the other, but in a spirit of speaking and listening, giving and receiving, explaining and being explained, understanding and being understood and that efforts are taken to establish communication across cultural/religious traditions.

The latest voice in favour of promoting such a culture of dialogue was that of Mahatma Gandhi and his advocacy of *Sarva Dharma Samabhava* (equiminded-ness to all Religions). Given the pluralist ethos of the country since ancient times, this is indeed a sound basis for the edifice of Indian nationalism. That Gandhi’s policy was diametrically opposed to the advocates of *Hindutva* is the principal reason why he was shot by those who wanted to enforce mono cultural nationalism by all means in India. But actually it is the Gandhian spirit of respecting pluralist legacy of Indian-age old practice that should really serve as the strong foundation for building a “new India.” Will the minorities realize this and be prepared to work at it. Perhaps the consecrated people need to realize the importance of reviving the Gandhian spirit with all fervour and vigour.

2.2 Secular Dialogue to Counter Religious Polarization

Apart from the dialogue being made use of among the religions, we should also initiate “dialogue with the world” more seriously. Especially the dialogue of common action should involve us to enter into not only dialogue with the religions but also dialogue with the world, with those ideologies which claim to be secular, agnostic or atheistic.

Such a dialogue should be done on the basis of individual conscience. In fact, the Vat II “Decree on Religious Freedom” (*Dignitatis Humanae*)¹² and its the Pastoral Constitution on “The Church in the Modern World” (*Gaudium et Spes*), speak about the dignity of every human, as human, and the role of conscience and its freedom.

In the context of today's political manipulation of nationalistic spirit in terms of exclusion, division and intimidation we are called to enter into dialogue with all human, in view of building a human community, based on his/ her conscience. While it is true that religious inspiration and energy can be very helpful animators in promoting collaboration in building a better world for all, religions may also be ambiguous. A spirit of fundamentalism may make a particular religious group look on other groups as enemies to be marginalized or overcome or even destroyed. In fact it is aggressive mission that has been a characteristic of some religions be it in some of the traditional methods of mission as conversion and conquest or the today's *gharwapasi* of the Hindu fundamentalists. Over and above that, religious communalism makes the religions tools of a political agenda seeking to promote economic, social and political betterment for one's own group. May be it is high time that we focussed on conscience as a factor that can unify all humans at a rational and human level.

The Vat II Decree *DH* affirms that every human person is endowed with human dignity which needs to be respected. An element of this dignity is freedom, especially in the area of religious practice. 'Each one is bound to seek the truth, but is free to do it in his/her own way' (DH 2-3). The state and civil society must respect and protect this freedom. Since the humans are not merely individuals but social beings they have the right to seek the truth as a community.

It is significant to note that the stance taken by Second Vatican Council is very much in line with **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**:

- All human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Art.1).
- Therefore he must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters (Art. 3).
- Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance (Art.18).

Thus, it is clear that conscience is recognized as a universal gift given by God to all the humans as humans, irrespective of whatever religion or culture they may

belong to. Through conscience, the humans can discern God's law inscribed in each one's heart. This law is common to all the humans, prior to any religious affiliation.

The Vat. II in its *GS* identifies the prospects and problems of the world as those of the Christians too. "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ"(GS 1). Hence it expressed its desire to dialogue and work with them in building up a more equal and just world. "Hence, giving witness and voice to the faith of the whole people of God gathered together by Christ, this council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with, as well as its respect and love for the entire human family with which it is bound up, than by engaging with it in *conversation* about these various problems (GS 3).

It is in this context that the Council develops further this notion of conscience. "In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged (GS 9). Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths (GS 16). In a wonderful manner conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbour (GS 11). In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals from social relationships." The deepest core of the humans is their conscience; there they are in touch with God. They may belong to different religions or may refuse to belong to any. But they cannot escape this moral sense of what is right and what is wrong, what they have to do and what they have to avoid. Conscience, as a matter of fact, has an inter religious dimension. "Through loyalty to conscience Christians are joined to other men in the search for truth and for the right solution to so many moral problems which arise both in the life of individuals and from social relationships" (GS 16).

It is significant to know that the Vat II **prohibits the use of force in religious matters:**

"It is through his conscience that man sees and recognizes the demands of the divine law. He is bound to follow this conscience faithfully in all his activity so that he may come to God, who is his last end. Therefore he must not be forced to act

contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters (DH 3: 3a).

Further the same document says: “In spreading religious belief and in introducing religious practices everybody must at all times avoid any action which seems to suggest coercion or dishonest or unworthy persuasion especially when dealing with the uneducated or the poor. Such a manner of acting must be considered an abuse of one’s own right and an infringement of the rights of others” (DH 4:4b).

The modern civilization with all its progress has not only produced profound changes in all realms of life, cultural, social, moral and religious but is also embedded in many sorts of paradoxes, tensions and imbalances. Some of the paradoxes pointed out by GS are the following:

“While the growth in wealth is evident, the gap between the rich and the poor is also increasing” (GS 4). Communications make possible a greater unity among people, but there are ethnic, economic, political and religious conflicts everywhere. Scientific advance is undeniable, but it seems to be used to control people rather than free them. The traditional social order seems to be breaking down, but widespread migrations and refugees bring in new social problems. Some young people seem more keen and active in religious practice, but secularization is also spreading (GS 24). We seek the “common good, which is the sum total of social condition which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily” (GS 26).

Some of the more urgent problems that the document focuses on are marriage and the family, culture, economic and social life, politics, the solidarity of peoples, and peace.

- The **family** is a sort of basic community in society. It is in the family that a child grows, is socialized and learns basic human and moral values. But it seems to be in crisis today.
- **Culture** is a symbolic world that helps people to reach out to the transcendent. Through science the humans have discovered the secrets of the universe and have learnt to use them for their own benefit through appropriate technologies. The creativity of different groups of people, further diversified by local resources and factors like the weather, has resulted in the emergence of different culture.

- A focus on **science and technology**, while downplaying the arts may lead to a mechanization of life. Scientism may lead to secularization, emphasizing the instrumentalization of culture. The role of religion in culture would be to add depth to it in terms of values, perspectives and goals. Many religions animating one culture and many cultures socializing one religion may give rise to various tensions especially where religious fundamentalism and communalism may try to use culture for their own ends. But rising secular tendencies would be a counter balance.
- **Economics and Politics:** Newer means of production and distribution have made it possible to meet the growing needs of the human community. At the same time the task of making money may tend to dominate life and inequality between the rich and the poor is growing. Economic development must be at the service of the humans who control economic structures and processes. Automation should not be promoted at the expense of peoples' jobs. People should have the experience of working together for the economic betterment of all so that labour disputes may be avoided.
- **History** has seen many political systems. However, there would be consensus today around a democratic set up, in which people have a sense of partnership and responsibility. The freedom and rights of everyone will be respected and the minorities of every kind— religious, ethnic, etc.—will be protected. A variety of points of view could meet in an active discussion and lead to a consensus on which common action could be based. Basic moral principles should govern every exercise of authority. Democracy should be participative, while the state respects the autonomy of social institutions like the family and various associative groups.
- **Peace and Dialogue:** Cooperation in the economic and political sphere to promote justice and community is certainly a must. Cooperation demands dialogue. The Church is ready to dialogue with everyone. For our part, our eagerness for such dialogue, conducted with appropriate discretion and leading to truth by way of love alone, exclude nobody; we would like to include those who respect outstanding human values without realizing who the author of values is, as well as those who oppose the Church and persecute it in various ways. Since God the Father is the beginning and end of all things, we are all called to be brothers; we ought to work together without violence and without deceit to build up the world in a spirit of genuine peace (GS 92).

2.3 Will not Dialogue impair the basic beliefs of Christianity?

From the way we have elaborated dialogue above, some may raise a question: Will not dialogue lead us to compromise with our faith-claims and to give up our uniqueness. To deal with this problem, first we must note the basic constituents of Religion.

First, we must note that religion wields power over an immense field of activity with Ultimate value. As Paul Tillich defines, faith is the ultimate concern.

Next, it is evident that religion is composed of four 'Cs' (Creed, Cult, Code and Community)

- (1) **Creed**, proposes beliefs as an answer to the ultimate concern as the Truth.
- (2) **Cult** comprises of prayers, rituals and sacraments or *samskaras* that one must perform to connect with the Ultimate.
- (3) **Code of conduct**, prescribes "dos" and "don'ts" for moral living so that one will easily attain the Ultimate.
- (4) The desired **Community**, it would like to establish, is variously named, *Sangha* (Buddhism), *Ram Rajya* (Hinduism), Kingdom of God (Christianity) and, *Umma* or *Kudai Raj* (Islam)

Now, of the four components of religion, mentioned above:

The first two 'C's contain certain level of exclusivism. It is understandable, because the creed and cult are the results of their origin in specific scriptures and traditions made meaningful through myths, rituals and symbols. So people of one religion may not be expected to endorse the belief-systems or participate in the worship pattern of another religion.

The last two 'C's are certainly useful for all religious believers to enter into common dialogue so as to contribute to community building. For the authenticity of a believer in any religion is tested not so much by what one believes or worships, as the way one relates to the other. No religion prescribes a follower to kill others, steal the property of others, or lie to people. Thus the ethics of diverse religions unanimously prescribe love, peace, justice, service, sacrifice and compassion as ideals that all must strive for. Herein lies the power of religion unleashed by Gautama Buddha and Guru Gobind Singh, and, more recently, by Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa.¹³

Here, it may be significant to cite just a couple of examples to establish religions teach fundamentally the same code of conduct:

- 1) **The statement of the ‘Golden Rule’** proposed by all religions is the same. To compare our statement with that of Hinduism:
 - The New Testament says: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets” (Mt. 7:12).
 - The Mahabharata says about the same golden rule: “Action which is against one’s own desire, should also not be done to others. One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one’s own self. Therefore one should treat all others as one’s own self” (XXX.113.8., 115.9).
- 2) **As regards the rules of conduct**, too similar comparison could be made.
 - The *Mahavratas* (the five great vows) prescribed in Jainism, and accepted in Buddhism and Hinduism are: Nonviolence, Truth-telling, Chastity, Non-Possession and Non-Stealing
 - The Decalogue, in its later portion which relate to ethics are exactly the same: Thou shalt not kill (V). Thou shalt not commit adultery & Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife (VI and IX). Thou shalt not steal (VII). Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor (VIII). Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s (X).

Thus, if we can set aside debates on the Cult and Creed to the believers, and if we must concertedly engage in communitarian initiatives that benefit all people beyond the confines of our religious boundaries, then, we will surely be working hand-in-hand for a harmonious India. Religions are for human society. In a multi-religious society each religion is an indispensable resource since it deals with symbols that evoke emotions and animate action. They all could be tapped for constructive purposes. In fact there was an issue of *India Today* Magazine in the early 1990s which was devoted to getting the suggestions from readers regarding what is to be done in the disputed site at *Ayodhya*. Many readers had made the suggestion that “the disputed land in *Ayodhya* could be used to build a Health Centre “to serve the poor for free.” This, they said, would symbolize Lord Ram’s benevolence more forcefully than a *mandir*. Muslims could remember that Allah is *Al-Rahman* and *Al-Rahim* – The Most Compassionate who inspires the building of universal *Umma*. Christians would recall Jesus’ teaching that ultimate criterion for people to enter the Kingdom was caring for the last and the least of people (Mt 25:35-41).

Conclusions of Part 2

From the above, it is hopefully clear that the following three conclusions can be drawn:

1. The consecrated people cannot ignore that their mission is basically to extend the kingdom of God by bearing witness to the Gospel in such a way that it is adapted to the mentality of people and circumstances of the place, irrespective of the fact whether they are believers or not.
2. By being engaged in interreligious dialogue, the consecrated persons will help religious-minded people to draw upon the treasury of religious symbols of their respective community to build the nation fully human and truly religious. This will surely halt fundamentalists to define *dharma* and manipulate the religious symbols,
3. By promoting secular dialogue, the consecrated people would be strengthening the power of civil society. The more vigorous civil society grows the more rigorous would be the attack on politics of polarization.

Finally, while **interreligious dialogue** will reinforce the cooperation among the followers of different religions, **dialogue with the world** would re-vigourate the powers of civil society. The double pronged dialogue will thus put up a strong front against politics of division, exclusion and polarization. More than that, this would promote the mission of establishing God's Reign on earth.

PART 3 RECONCILIATION: A WAY OF COUNTERING RELIGIOUS POLARIZATION

If dialogue is taken to be an initiative during peacetimes, reconciliation is an initiative that needs to be taken after a communal conflict.

Literally, the term 'reconciliation' means reviving the friendly relation again.

So in the real social context, especially in the context of a communal problem, reconciliation indicates the need to restore the broken relationships and to rebuild our good relationships. This involves acceptance of the offender with a view to making possible restoration of relationship. Even when we happen to live in a divided, broken and polarised world and our common human togetherness is diminished, we cannot allow ourselves to be simply be caught up by the web of despair. We need to repair our relationships, we need to rediscover the primordial vocation of being community of persons and learn the humanizing art of inter-human relations. Then only even the survival of humankind is possible.

The main reason for it is the societal dimension of our humanity. Archbishop Desmond Tutu in his Foreword to the book *Exploring Forgiveness* speaks about the Zulu concept *Ubuntu* which means “I am, because you are”. It is in this belongingness that essence of being human consists. To quote his words: “my humanity is caught up in your humanity because we say person is a person through other persons. I am a person because I belong. The same is true for you. The solitary human being is a contradiction in terms”.¹⁴ In the same book, exploring restorative justice, emphasises the need to broaden the concept of forgiveness beyond individual to institutions, communities and even nations: “The ability to give and ask for forgiveness is one of the unique things which makes us human”.¹⁵ He says that individual, communitarian and organizational acts of apology, forgiveness and reconciliation will enrich the quality of an entire community.

Generally, in our individual interactions, reconciliation is brought about when the offender feels sorry for the offence and the offended forgives the offender. A housewife from the Basque country, Carmen Hernandez, who saw her husband shot dead in June 2000, gave the following testimony of her struggle to wrest forgiveness out of the anger against those who destroyed her life and that of her daughters:

To forgive is not a ‘duty’, nor is it to forget, nor an expression of moral superiority, nor a renunciation of one’s rights. To *forgive is an act of liberation*. It is to go beyond justice. To struggle for forgiveness, to assume it as a challenge, and to speak about it, is to enter the path of *becoming more human*, more of a person. Reconciliation might not happen, but one can always extend one’s hand and try to help [...]. It is very difficult to go ahead when violence continues, but I also believe that we must renew our effort and continue to try.¹⁶

When Rev. Staines Graham and his sons were murdered in Orissa in that fateful night of January 22-23, 1999, Mrs. Staines announced that in her heart she had forgiven the criminals. Yet after the culprits were caught, the law took its own course and Dara Singh was sentenced to death. Does this mean that it was just a spiritual achievement of Mrs Staines without political consequences? Does her forgiveness have any effect on the murderer and on society in general? Forgiveness can have an effect on the individual who receives forgiveness only if one is conscious of having done evil. If the criminals consider themselves as performing a social or religious duty in their crimes, forgiveness has no meaning. For them, however, forgiveness is not futile. It affects society in general by setting the standards of generous behaviour. It softens the revenge instinct and in this it humanizes society.¹⁷

When the equitable social relations are infringed by an individual, society as protector of the common good based on justice has a right and an obligation to 'punish' the individual. Punishment is an affirmation of the social order, of dharma. It supposes legitimate authority (who acts on behalf of the social body) and has the responsibility for the social order. Punishment does not undo injustice or remove sin. It has social function. Only if it leads to repentance can it be truly transformative of the individual.¹⁸

In India, we had the massacre of innocent Sikhs after assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, the carnage of innocents in Gujarat after the Godhra train incident. But not even a semblance of apology by the government concerned was given.

The painful memories of partition touch mainly two communities whose socio-cultural identities are supposedly shaped by two religions. But the post partition eruptions of communal violence and bloodshed are used by Hindu extremists to perpetuate bitter memory stroking communal hatred. We need to open a new chapter.

But will they ask for forgiveness from the Dalits for their collective sin of Untouchability, and repair the millennial iniquity? The Varna system not only hierarchizes society but also human beings into high and low. As Ambedkar puts it: not only division of labour but also of labourers. Reconciliation of a caste-ridden society with caste power operative for domination and privilege leading to discrimination against the lower castes is possible only when Indian society moves into the direction of the Constitutional goals of equality, fraternity and justice and freedom. It was only Gandhi who grasped that the responsibility lay on both the sides of the caste Hindus and the so called Untouchables. So he insisted upon the conversion of both. Especially he was working very hard for awakening the conscience of the caste Hindus. That is one main reason why he objected to the communal Award given by the British colonialists.

Forgiveness of an individual/collective offence touches primarily our fractured relationships and our life in community. When a community is offended and hurt, sometimes broken, crushed and humiliated, forgiveness and reconciliation becomes a complex and difficult process. But it calls for responsibility for the broken relationships and a commitment to rebuild and work for restoration and wholeness of relationships.

It may be doubtful that punishment be inflicted on groups. But forgiveness involving justice with mercy can be applied to the relations between groups to groups. It is even necessary to take steps of mercy and open the way to forgiveness for

all cases, especially for cases that have long standing consequences for the national and international well-being. This is all the more necessary and proper when nations have evolved and the new generations which were not even born in the times of conflict are affected by the enduring conflict.¹⁹ This does not mean that duties and obligations arising from the past do not have a bearing on new generations. Anyway, since the collective identity has its own rights and responsibilities, the groups/nations will have to fulfil certain demands like individuals.

Care must be taken that all the groups, first, acknowledge their roles in the conflicts of the past; that legal conflicts be faced of course in terms of the present situation not by continuing to demand the pound of flesh. Thirdly, forgiveness when needed be asked and offered, thereby closing pending accounts and that whenever possible at least symbolic reparation be made by groups that are most at fault.

But in a world divided into the powerful and the powerless, the offended, or the deprived or humiliated are often powerless. It is not that easy to expect the powerless to offer forgiveness to the powerful and set in motion a process of reconciliation with them. It is also true that the powerful will not be willing to receive forgiveness from the powerless. They may not be ready to accept responsibility for their wrongful deeds hurting the powerless, much less will be ready for transformation of the power-relations.²⁰ Here it is only by a political act that reconciliation be brought about. It calls for transformation of the powerful giving up their power-dominance and the powerless being empowered for dignity and freedom so as to offer forgiveness in dignity and freedom. The transformation of power relations involving four steps:²¹

- (1) The offender has to be willing to accept responsibility for the injustice done and to undo its evil consequences, either by compensating appropriately and building broken relationships, and be open to receive the offer of forgiveness from the offended or the victims. In a word, he must be ready for repentance and transformation.
- (2) The willingness to offer forgiveness on the part of the offended party does not mean condoning of the evil nor ignoring of the offence, but a recognition of the evil for what it is. But it only means a “no” to an approach of retaliation and aims at breaking the cycle of endless repetition of tooth for tooth and eye for eye. It actually implies acknowledgement of humanity of the offender and therefore readiness to go beyond retributive (punitive) justice towards restorative justice.
- (3) Both the offenders and the victims have to be involved as subjects of the process of reconciliation. That is, there should be genuine willingness on the

part of both the communities to speak, dialogue, and negotiate so that they can build peace for all. The liberation of the offended is inseparable from the liberation of the offender, while transformation of power relations between the powerful and the powerless takes place.

- (4) The popular statement “forgive and forget” is to be understood in the proper light. It may give an impression that one need to repress or suppress the memory of the evil, once you have forgiven. But what is repressed or suppressed can erupt later and disturb one’s harmony much more later. So, what is required is to face the evil past, accept it for what it is and take responsibility to undo it or repair it, and to work for appropriate restitution and to rebuild our humanity. Thus it becomes a liberative and constructive way of handling the past evil.

We remember the past in order not to repeat it, but rather to build a new community with the descendants of evil doers, and to become neighbours and community again.²²

To achieve this in a collective way, we may have to develop ways, methods and pedagogies of reconciliation and peace building.

- Education to teach these things and to promote counter-cultural perspectives in favour of reconciliation and peace.
- Civil society is to be nurtured so that the recent rewriting of textbooks of history with a communalistic perspectives are challenged.
- There is no real forgiveness or reconciliation without removing injustice²³ and restoring justice. No doubt, it cannot be by **retributive justice**: a tit for tat system, or just revenge, regulated by law through competitive authority. Neither can it be **commutative** justice is restitution or compensation proportionate to the haram or damage done (fine or imprisonment). It is punitive, with a view to deterring the crime in future. But it will be **restorative** justice aims at “restoration to wholeness of those whose lives and relationships have been broken. It is deeply connected to forgiveness and reconciliation. It is justice with mercy, leading to humanized society. The concern here is about the type of human community we want to be.
- It is closely connected with the repentance required for Christian forgiveness.²⁴ Forgiveness of sin requires that (1) one acknowledges that one has committed a sin; (2) feels really sorry for it; (3) resolves to turn away from the evil; (4) confesses them to the person in authority and (5) accepts serious purpose of

amendment for the effects of the evil deed and looks to the future of renewed life.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that any religion of whatever tradition it may belong to emphasizes the role of forgiveness and reconciliation in meaningful living of human life. In Judeo Christian religions the real reconciliation is possible only if the five conditions of forgiveness, mentioned above, are fulfilled. But in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, the law of Karma takes care of the punishments or rewards in an inexorable manner. This is itself a call for restoring a reconciled relationship.

In this connection, interreligious dialogue, prayer meetings can serve as a powerful tool to elicit remorse in people's conscience and also serve a moral community for exploration of reconciliation and peace.

This is in fact in line with a world moral community, sharing a common ethical vision for a reconciled and peaceful world. It is encouraging that our neighbouring countries have already reinforced the way. In 1994 the then Prime Minister of Japan Tomiichi Muayama issued an official statement expressing remorse for Japan's actions during the World War II:

Japan's actions in a certain period of the past not only claimed numerous victims here in Japan, but also left the peoples of neighbouring Asia and elsewhere with scars that are painful even today. I am thus taking this opportunity to state my belief, based on my profound remorse for these acts of aggression, colonial rule, and the like, that caused such unbearable suffering and sorrow for so many people, that Japan's future path should be one of making every effort to build world peace in line with my non-war commitment.²⁵

This is also in line with the secular viewpoint of world order. Thus the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 60/10 in 2005 titled: "Promotion of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace".²⁶The resolution takes note of "several mutually inclusive and reinforcing initiatives on interreligious, intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogues and cooperation for peace, lists around a half a dozen Regional Summit on Interreligious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue carried out around the world from 2004-2005. More importantly, the resolution highlights the importance of interreligious dialogue in four operational paragraphs. One and three are most appropriate for our purpose:

Recognising the commitment of all religions to peace,

1. Affirms that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilisations and of the culture of peace;

3. Invites the Secretary-General to continue to bring the promotion of interreligious dialogue to the attention of all Governments, regional organisations and relevant international organisations, including ways to strengthen the linkages and focus more on practical actions in the implementation of the initiatives on interreligious dialogue and cooperation for peace;

This is exactly what is required for India today. And as a member of the UN, India is even duty-bound by the resolution as the above mentioned paragraph indicates it.

Finally, it may be appropriate to fix the crown of our conclusion with the precious pearls culled from the ancient sources of Indian heritage:

a) The Rig Veda gives us the call:

Come together, talk together,
Let our minds be in harmony,
Common be our prayer,
Common be our end
Common be our purpose
Common be our deliberations,
Common be our desires,
United be our hearts,
United be our intentions,
Perfect be the union among us (X.191.2-4).

b) The *Yajurveda* declares:

May all beings look at me,
With friendly eye.
May I look at all
With friendly eye.
May all look at one another
With friendly eye (XXXVI.18).

Endnotes

¹ A revised paper presented in Seminar on *Politics of Exclusivity, Division and Intimidation: A Critical Response from the Consecrated Person*, Sanyasa Institute of Consecrated Life, Carmelaram, Bengaluru, Feb.1-3, 2018.

² A. PUSHARAJAN, *Second Vatican Council on Dialogue*, Bengaluru 2009, 29-36.

³ SECRETARIAT FOR NON-CHRISTIANS, *The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission*, Vatican City 1984, 29. Here afterwards this document will be referred to as DM.

⁴ DM 31, 32.

⁵ DM 33.

⁶ DM 35.

⁷ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE, *Dialogue and Proclamation* (1992) 42.

⁸ S. WESLEY ARIARAJAH, "Creating a 'Culture of Dialogue' in a Multi-cultural and Pluralist Society" in PHILIP LEE, ed., *Communication and Reconciliation: Challenges Facing the 21 Century*, London 2001, 5.

⁹ I am indebted to the analysis made by S. WESLEY ARIARAJAH, *op.cit.*, 5-7.

¹⁰ A clear and convincing expose of this thesis is elaborated by AMARTYA SEN, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity*, London 2005.

¹¹ Here again I closely follow the argument put forward by WESLEY ARIARAJAH, *op.cit.*, 8-9

¹² The two documents mentioned here, will be referred to in their abbreviated form "DH" and "GS" in the body of the paper.

¹³ FRANCIS GONSALVES –APARAJITA BANERJEE, "Ayodhya and a True Ram Rajya", Open page (March 7).

¹⁴ ROBERT D. ENRIGHT – JOANNA NORTH, ed., *Exploring Forgiveness*, Wisconsin 1998, xiii, as quoted by S. AROKIASAMY, "Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Healing in Relational Perspective", in JOHN CHATHANATT – MANINDRA N. THAKUR, ed., *Wounded History: Religion, Conflict, Psyche and Social Healing*, Delhi 2006, 189.

¹⁵ S. AROKIASAMY, in ROBERT D. ENRIGHT – JOANNA NORTH, ed., *op.cit.*, 190.

¹⁶ GEORGE GISPERT-SAUCH, "Forgiveness, Justice Politics Some Theological Reflections", in JOHN CHATHANATT –MANINDRA N. THAKUR, ed., *op.cit.*, 210.

¹⁷ GEORGE GISPERT-SAUCH, 212.

¹⁸ GEORGE GISPERT-SAUCH, 213.

¹⁹ GEORGE GISPERT SAUCH, 214.

²⁰ S. AROKIASAMY, 193.

²¹ S. AROKIASAMY, 194-196.

²² S. AROKIASAMY, 197.

²³ Justice is distinguished between commutative justice, retributive justice, distributive justice and social justice.

²⁴ S. AROKIASAMY, 199.

²⁵ As quoted by GEORGE GISPERT SAUCH, 203.

²⁶ UN Resolution for 2005: “0/10. Promotion of interreligious dialogue and cooperation for peace”.

BOOK REVIEWS

Dr. A. Pushparajan, *The Mahatma and Christian Mission Today: Re-visiting Pope Francis' Evangelii Gaudium in the light of Gandhian Insights*, Bengaluru: ATC Publishers, 2018, pp. (xxii+442) 464, Rs.500/-.

The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium), the Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Francis is his first major document, aptly acclaimed to be his manifesto. The intent of the document is avowedly “to embark upon **a new chapter** of evangelization” and to point out **new paths for** the Church’s journeys in the years to come” (EG 1). This aim candidly stated in the very opening paragraph of the document is achieved in three steps: denouncing, renouncing and announcing.

- Openly **denouncing** some of the past ways of Christian mission like the proselytization, institutionalized structures, and other practices that have been going on in the Church for centuries. Also pinpointing the many external challenges that impact the Church’s mission: individualism, consumerism, economy of exclusion, mammon and violence that are inbuilt in the modern civilization.
- Bravely calling for **renouncing** some of the claims and practices which try to maintain the “self-preservation mode” of the Church. Spiritual worldliness, for example, is a matter of urgent renouncement for the Church so as to face the challenges from without.
- Valiantly affirming that the Church will thrive only by **announcing** the joy of the experience of salvation by Jesus the Lord, and spreading the aroma all around us and in all that we do.

Surprisingly enough the same sort of critique had been anticipated by Mahatma Gandhi in his own way and context, all with a view to approximating the noble goal of a healthy pursuit of Christian mission in India.

- Gandhi boldly **denounced** the methods of proselytization of the past missionaries, and the web of the modernist challenges in which the church was caught unawares. He plainly said: “I am a rebel against orthodox (official) Christianity”. He accused them of distorting the original message of Jesus Christ. He disapproved their approaches towards the local cultures and religions.
- Gandhi constantly demanded the missionaries **to renounce** some of their tall claims but counter-witnessing practices so that ‘their’ Christianity might be close to Christ. He told about them openly: “My quarrel with Christian missionaries is that they think no religion other than Christianity is true.” He pleaded with them to re-read the message of the Bible in the light of the spiritual experiences found in other religions.
- Gandhi was incessantly pleading with the missionaries of his day: ‘Live the Gospel of Love and spread the aroma of your salvation’.

It is astonishing that a non-Christian Gandhi made a parallel critique of the Christian mission over a century ago to the missionaries of his day through his dialogues, interviews, news-paper articles, conferences, correspondence, and other writings.

Obviously Christian circles did not pay much heed to Gandhi. Much less did they decide upon any change in the missionary style of the Church as Gandhi expected! They continued to tread on the same old path of missionary journey even after Vatican II. Consequently therefore, the Church landed in a grave missionary crisis.

There needed a ‘great soul’ saturated with the same spiritual bent of mind and intoxicated with spiritual valour of that a high quality, evinced by the world-acknowledged ‘Mahatma’ (Great Soul) so that the deepest yearning of that Great Soul could be grasped on the same wavelength and responded to them accordingly.

The author of the present book recognizes that ‘great soul’ in Pope Francis and establishes it in the final chapter of the book. And all the other chapters, prepare the reader to accept this thesis, by elucidating the similarities between Gandhi and Pope Francis in respect of the 70 themes taken for considerations in the 70 chapters. The first four chapters constitute the preliminaries: introducing the subject, explaining the vast number of differences between Pope Francis and Gandhiji, and yet examining the credentials for considering Gandhi to be compared with the Holy Father. Thus there are in all 75 chapters in this volume, each running about 6 pages

on an average, with a manageable size so as to be read intensely within a few minutes but be allowed to get sunk into the depth of one's mind.

The author of the book says that on reading the *EG* for the first time, he was surprised to see the pet-phrase of the Pope 'evangelization by attraction' resonated the 'Gospel of Rose' which Mahatma Gandhi was fond of using while pleading with the missionaries of his days. Stimulated by this gut-feeling, he made a persistent research, intermittently although, and discovered over seventy themes from *EG* which run in parallel to the insights of Gandhi. It is those discoveries that are collected in this volume. It is surely an in-depth study of Pope's *EG* in the light of Gandhian insights.

It is ultimately the spiritual perspective that brings the two spiritual stalwarts in close proximity to each other, although they are cut apart from each other in a vast number of diversities. It is indeed the spiritual concern about the Church that makes Pope Francis to perceive the problem regarding evangelization as the world-recognized Mahatma perceived it. Again it is the similarity of spiritual outlook and approach that enables Pope Francis to approximate the historic Mahatma in diagnosing the crisis and suggesting remedial measures as the Mahatma did. The spiritual flavor which permeates the whole document, corroborated with his own personal testimonies make a special appeal to the Indian mind. It is this fundamental unity of spirituality between the two great leaders that has drawn the author to bring out this valuable book.

Despite the vast number of differences between Mahatma Gandhi and Pope Francis, if the latter has the perception of the problem regarding Christian mission, in similar lines with the historic Mahatma, and if the diagnosis of the crisis as well as the remedial measures suggested by the Pope approximate the same vision of the historic Mahatma, it is surely an indicator that they both are fundamentally united in their spiritual outlook. It is the kindred spirit of the world-acknowledged Mahatma that is able to officially admit that there is a need for embarking on a new chapter on evangelization and for setting a new path approximately in parallel ways of thinking as anticipated by the already world recognized Mahatma, it is clear that the root cause of the missionary crisis has been identified rightly. Likewise if the remedies for the crisis as suggested by our Holy Father in his Apostolic Exhortation also fall in exactly parallel to the suggestions already made by Mahatma of the yore. Now that our spiritual head of the Church has reiterated in his own manner the critical comments of Mahatma Gandhi, we can no longer ignore his critique of Christian mission today. In fact now it has become an imperative for us to pay a greater attention to his correctives.

It was not simply finding a parallel between the thoughts of the two Mahatmas that is the top priority of interest. In the process of studying the considerations of *EG* in parallel with the spiritual insights of Mahatma Gandhi, the author finds them very relevant to one's day to day living of really an authentic Christian commitment. This is one reason why the massive Magisterium is split into small themes, all presented with the spiritual standpoint of Mahatma Gandhi, and has drawn out convincingly the spiritual threads all through, so as to enable the readers realize the 'salvation' wrought by Jesus Christ and manifest the joy in everyone's life situation and in every bit of one's life. Thus it proves to be a practical guidebook for spirituality that is inbuilt in the doctrinal /authoritative teachings of the Church, empowering the faithful to live one's call in one's day to life and thus really a missionary in action.

Every chapter, concerned with the parallel themes, starts with a lucid presentation of the points as expounded in the *EG* regarding that theme. Next, the parallel insights from the Mahatma, are given in correspondence to each of the main points of the *EG*, culled from his massive writings, which may be verified in 100 volumes of *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Finally a pithy statement is given by way of summing up or for leading the reader to for further reflection or by way of suggesting an action programme. That would certainly elicit every Christian faithful to realize one's responsibility to be an evangelizer in one's own merit and to spread the aroma of the joy of the Gospel.

On the basis of the parallel thoughts of these two great spiritual leaders on evangelization, one may be certain that Dr. Pushparajan's book does contribute to a re-reading of Pope's Exhortation, re-interpretation of his thought from our context, and re-discovering of his concerns in the light of Gandhi's standpoint, thus re-energizing us to carry on the New Evangelization with greater fervor and rigour by being determined to live every bit of one's life with real joy, wrought to us by the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is one of the rare books that a clergy, a consecrated person or a lay person simply cannot miss.

M. Arul Jesu Robin, CMF

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