

People's Reporter

A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Central Government Budget 2013-14

A budget in resonance with strategies for economic reform and liberalisation

Not only that Chidambaram's Budget never made any direct reference to the nation's socio-economic objectives, on the other hand it is resonant with strategies for economic reform and liberalisation. Every public budget should be seen as a short but bold step towards a better tomorrow. This is missing.

(Interview with Dr. M. A. Oommen, eminent economist and the Director of the K. M. Mani Centre for Budget Studies, Cochin University of Science and Technology)

PR: In his current Budget speech, P. Chidambaram said: "The purpose of a budget and the job of a Finance Minister is to create the economic space and find the resources to achieve the socio-economic objectives". How far is this correct in your opinion?



not a pre-election budget in any meaningful or conventional sense of the term.

PR: The Finance Minister has presented the budget when the Current Account Deficit (CAD) has crossed the 'danger-level'. Yet, it appears that the budget does not address this issue seriously, except

For me, a Budget is a financial instrument that facilitates the attainments of the national socio-economic objectives. It has to be admitted that the finance minister has to raise the resources required to meet these objectives in a time bound fashion. For Indian federal democracy the directive principles of state policy are well laid out in the Constitution. Not only that Chidambaram's Budget never made any direct reference to the nation's socio-economic objectives, on the other hand it is resonant with strategies for economic reform and liberalisation. Every public budget should be seen as a short but bold step towards a better tomorrow. This is missing.

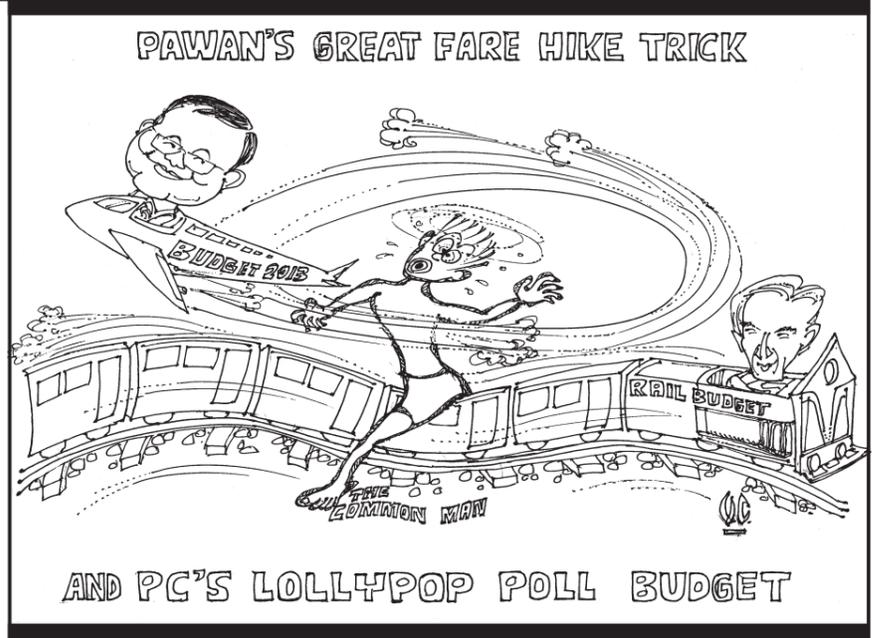
PR: Can this budget be called a pre-election budget in the sense that it has many proposals to improve the quality of life of vast sections of poor and deprived people?

The implications of the question do not seem to be in good taste. The poor and the deprived are not a set to be manipulated or even taken care of at the election eve. If so, what is the meaning of social inclusion which is the title of the 12th Plan last chapter approved by the National Development Council in December 2012. Frankly, this Budget is

underscoring the policy of encouraging inflow of Foreign Investments. Do you think that this would help resolve the basic problem?

A current account deficit occurs when a country's total import of goods, services and transfers is greater than its total export of goods, services and transfers. This situation makes a country a net-debtor to the rest of the world. The problem can be contained by curtailing imports or by expanding exports which in the context of the present depressed world economy is a difficult task. In a fast globalising and growing economy it is difficult to reduce imports by raising tariffs or through quantitative restrictions. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) can help. But FIIs are fair-weather friends of doubtful seaworthiness. They are profit-seekers who may leave you when you are in critical need. One has to be choosy about the FDIs. Unfortunately we have a government that takes pride in retail FDIs. The Finance Minister conveniently forgets that more than 40% of FDIs of India come through the clandestine Mauritius route which is a tax haven. Look at the way in which the implementation of General Anti-tax

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Findings from UCAN survey

Identify unity in the Church as the Vatican's top priority

The survey - conducted from February 18-28 - attracted 2,300 responses, with the majority (72 percent) from Asia. More than three quarters identified sexual abuse and how Church authorities respond to it as the most important challenge facing the Church and the new Pope.

UCAN: Bangkok:

Sex abuse and its handling by Church authorities is the top priority for the next Pope, according to a recent readership survey conducted by ucanews.com.

A close second was conflict in the Church in Europe and the United States, which 66 percent of respondents identified as either the highest or second highest priority for the new papal administration.

Other issues of concern included unifying the Church, a more practical ecumenical approach and a more pastoral response to divorcees.

There was no clear consensus in response to Pope Benedict XVI's resignation, with the largest group of respondents expressing "shock", while others described their response as "sad," "sorry," and "puzzled."

Several respondents expressed admiration for the courage it took for Pope Benedict to step down.

Perhaps most significant were responses on whether or not Benedict's resignation will establish a precedent.

Almost two-thirds of respondents said

that future Popes' tenures should be limited, either for a fixed term (23 percent) or up to a retirement age of 75 years old (42 percent). The remainder thought it should be a lifetime commitment.

There were criticisms that, in the last 30 years, the Vatican has not addressed the care of the divorced and remarried, despite many requests from bishops' conferences to do so. More than 58 percent of respondents identified unity in the Church as the Vatican's top priority, while the offering of a more pastoral approach to divorcees and the empowerment of bishops' conferences were both named as high priorities. Nearly 79 percent of respondents said the next Pope should come from outside Europe, with 45 percent saying the next Pope should come from an Asian country.

The prospects of an Asian Pope seem unlikely, with only seven of the voting cardinals from Asia among the 114 that will attend the conclave - four from India, one from Sri Lanka, one from China and one from the Philippines.

In contrast, 28 of the voting cardinals come from Italy alone.

-Source: ucanews.com

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People's Reporter

A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Budget will worsen the economic situation

One can understand the burden of a Finance Minister (FM) trying to strike a balance between economics and politics in his budget.

However, one cannot pardon the FM for the lack of seriousness in the Budget to address the basic ills of the economy. The Budget was presented in the context of grave macro-economic imbalances in the economy due to the twin-crises -high rates of Current Account Deficit (CAD) and Fiscal Deficit. CAD (deficit in trade balance) has reached 4.2% of GDP. According to the Reserve Bank of India, this ratio above 2.3% is dangerous. It must be noted that CAD increased from \$97 lakh in 1990-91 to \$782 lakh in 2011-12. The deficit increased 8 times, despite the fact that the value of our exports increased from \$185 lakh in 1990-91 to \$3098 lakh in 2011-12. This means that the goods we exported without charging taxes and tariff for the use of foreign nationals, denying them to our own people, increased 16 times during this period. Yet, our deficit in trade balance has been increasing at an alarming rate. Still, the crucial questions, this much sacrifice for what and for whom, are not discussed in the country. This is an outcome of the reforms, our rulers are committed to.

Unfortunately, the question, what is the right policy to rectify this is also not discussed. Inflow of more investments is the remedy suggested by the FM. In fact, the government has taken measures before the Budget itself to this end, by allowing foreign investments in retail trade, banking and insurance. In addition to this, the budget has proposed entry of foreign investors in the area of coal mining. The policy that allows steep rise in trade deficits on the one hand, and that seeks more foreign investments to rectify this problem on the other, is the right recipe for greater disaster in the economy.

Inflow of more foreign investments in the areas referred to above cannot bring the text book advantages – inflow of superior technology, and increase in exports and employment. Instead, the consequent economic and political dependence on foreign capital is bound to ruin our economy and political independence. The experience of Latin American countries shows that it was the presence of foreign capital that ruined their economies. It was after abandoning foreign capital that those countries achieved remarkable progress. Further, dreams about reaping benefits through inflow of more capital are bound to be day-dreams, because of the fact that the country is facing out-flow of capital substantially. Capital taken away from India by Indian business houses increased from \$580 crore in 2003 to \$10,080 crore in 2010. This was estimated to go up to \$11,170 crore in 2011. This means that the FM is taking pain to fill a barrel, the bottom of which is open. The latest Economic Survey and the budget reveal two truths: One, the economic reforms since 1991 have weakened the fundamentals of our economy; and two, the policy we introduce to rectify the 'original sin' is bound to make the fundamentals worse.

Thought for the Fortnight

A credit card is an anaesthetic which simply delays the pain.

– Helen Mason

Lenten Reflections

1 In search of Spirituality today

M. J. Joseph

In Jesus' time, there were two types of eschatologies. They were apocalyptic eschatology and the prophetic eschatology. Jesus identified himself with the prophetic one, for the transformation of the world.

Spirituality - a quest for the Ultimate

Spirituality is a much talked about subject in the religious and secular circles. Initiation into workshops of eco-spirituality, satsang groups, meditation lessons including yoga organized by the new-age religious gurus, electronic churches beckoning people for spirit - filled life, and miracle crusades led by Christian leaders are signs of spirituality in the present day.

In all these there are truths and errors. But one may notice an intense search for a grasp of the Ultimate and appropriation of energy pools for the cleansing of the soul. In an article of the Week Magazine (April 20, 2008)

entitled, "CEOs and Spirituality", there are several accounts of personal experiences of Company executives on this matter. In a self-discovery, one strikes a balance between the inner and the outer world.

Christ's way - the way for the disciples

In Jesus' time, there were two types of eschatologies. They were apocalyptic eschatology and the prophetic eschatology. Jesus identified himself with the prophetic one, for the transformation of the world. The participation of the humans is inevitable for the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. We should be "eyes to the blind and legs to the lame" (cf. Job. 19:15). The disciples were sent "to turn

the world upside down" (Acts 17:6) in the name of Christ. In this connection St. Matt. 28. 19-20 (cf. Mk. 16:15- proclaiming good news to all creation) is to be understood in a larger perspective of discipleship. What matters in God's sight is whether the light shines in darkness. Life through death is the basic criterion of Christian discipleship.

Living by the standards of divine love (agape)

As truth alone shall make one free (Jn. 8:32), let us therefore draw positive vibes from various ways of human quest. Spirituality is the outbreak of truth (Swami Agnivesh). In Christian theology, a life led "according to the Spirit"

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2 Strategy versus Straight forwardness

Israel Selvanayagam

When the world and the church praise strategists we mourn in solidarity with those straightforward people who have been victims of some sort of strategy. The word 'strategy' was originally used for skillful scheming of army generals. Their knowledge of the enemy's position and their cunning planning of action often resulted in victory. But at the same time, the enemy could be more strategic and win the battle.

Today, the word 'strategy' is used not only in the world of defense and war but also in business and institutional development. We often hear of strategic alliance, strategic partnership and so on. Does this have anything to do with straightforwardness? Strategic plan with venomous scheming or cunning behaviour to achieve a group's interest, has pushed honest leaders out. There are Church leaders and pastors, though theologically mediocre and spiritually superficial, have extraordinary capacity to scheme with a view to avoid potential opponents and to achieve their vested interests.

The strategists in the church often quote Jesus' words 'Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.' (Mt. 10: 16) This was following the mission statement 'I am sending you as lambs among the wolves.' As there is extraordinary courage needed to remain in this position, many lambs become wolves! Let us reflect further the simile 'serpents and doves.' Obviously, this was a popular proverb and whether Jesus used it literally or sarcastically, we don't know. Bible translators have struggled to translate the concerned Greek word and consequently we read 'be wise', 'be wary', 'be shrewd', 'be cautious', 'be prudent' and so on. If he meant literally, sorry Jesus, we cannot accept this proverb. Because if you put the serpent and dove together, what will happen? The serpent will torment and bite the dove!

There is always a possibility

to confuse wisdom with strategy. Wisdom operates with fear of God. To be wise means to be sensitive about the issues involved and to be able to present all possibilities. But it is built on absolute honesty and straightforwardness. The young Solomon asked for wisdom but soon he bargained it for strategy that included murdering his opponents, introducing forced labour and poll tax, cheat Iram, the king of Tyre and looting the economy of the country for his indulgence with hundreds of wives and concubines. He proved to be a disaster. Rightly, God was angry with him.

Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount emphasized straightforwardness. 'Simply let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No" "No"; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. James (5:12) repeats the same. In a democratic set up, if strategy is replaced by straightforwardness there could be always space to share, deliberate and interact and I hear some of my friends say this will not work in today's world and church. Let it be so. But certainly it is the solid test for a genuine commitment to Jesus who was always straightforward and open.

Some of the Jewish leaders in Jesus' time played strategy in order to finish off Jesus and his movement. Annas, Caiaphas, Herod and Pilot. The story of each of them may be written elaborately if we have space. Jesus played no strategy though there was the option of invoking an army. In the whole of trial he was wise using few words and

remaining silent. Among the innocent disciples one (Judas) reluctantly allowed himself to be roped by the scheming Jewish leaders. Don't mistake Judas. He had a good side as faithful bursar and lover of the poor. The thirty coins became nothing when it became sure that Jesus was to be executed. His cunning expectation that his betrayal and arrest would have made Jesus to escape dramatically and dash his enemies failed. Judas' strategy did not work and he hanged himself.

Was God too playing strategy using the wicked people as instruments to achieve his eternal plan of salvation? If so God is not different from those deities who act with capricious authority and maintain the law of karma. If we are willing to look at this issue differently, there is a stunning perception.

Accordingly, God was absolutely straightforward and open. God allowed Jesus to struggle for his life and for understanding the will of his Father. It all ended in a loud cry of dereliction. However, Jesus' integrity was so constant and consistent that event at the end, being horribly soaked with blood, he commended his spirit to his Father. His resurrection was part of the Author of Life's open commitment to sustain the survival of life. God was straightforward.

–The Rev. Dr. Israel Selvanayagam is Professor at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Chennai

Civil Economy instead of Immoral Economy

Gerhard Wegner

The great transformation

What is needed is a great transformation. The new societal contract; according to the German Scientific Council on Global Warming, combines a culture of awareness about ecological responsibility, a culture of multiple sharing and participation as a democratic responsibility; and a culture of commitment for future generation. The estimated minimum annual investment needed for this transformation up to 2030 ranges between \$ 200 to 1000 billion. An alternative estimate is 2% of world GDP - \$1600 billion.

How can the world raise this much amount? At the outset, we may feel that this much amount cannot be mobilised through the market. At the same time, we have to admit that without the market, this amount cannot be mobilized. The financial market today, instead of helping the desired transformation only makes every part of the world more volatile.

How to resist disastrous ecological change is a major question we face today. This can be achieved only by substantial transformative investment on a global scale. In order to mobilize the required capital for this, the markets, especially the financial markets have to be morally reframed; and for this, we have to accept the concept of a Civil Economy.

The need for a moral economy

The demand to defend traditional rights and customs comes not as a reaction to growing poverty. This demand comes out of the urge for a moral order which is essential for the survival of humanity. Attempts to isolate work from other activities of life and to subdue it to the laws of the market are meant to eliminate all organizational forms of being and to replace it with an atomistic and individualized form.

Today, production of goods has nothing to do with helping each other, or with caring in the households for those who belong to it, or with the pride of the craftsman of his profession or his satisfaction by public praise. It is nothing else than simple pursuit for profit. In the course of this development, humanity, according to Karl Polanyi, got



degraded to a mere accessory of the economic system. The necessity to dwell together on earth had precedence of the life of the community, neighbourhood and the nation in the past. Humans, created by corporate life and cohabitation are expected to live together not only with those who did not ever choose to live

with them. We, according to Judith Butler, are obliged to protect their lives and the plurality, they are part of.

African moral economy

In the old days, Africans had never aspired for the possession of personal wealth for the purpose of dominating any of his fellows. The very desire to accumulate personal wealth used to be interpreted as a vote of non-confidence in the social system there. Because, when a society is so organized that it cares for its individuals, then, provided, he is willing to work, no individual within that society should worry about what will happen to him tomorrow if he does not hoard wealth today.

Capitalism: Immoral economy

The kernel of capitalism is the structure of capital itself: Money is invested to get more money.

The movement of capital disembeds work and ecology out of the real life connections. It uses every activity for expansion of capital; and the success of capitalism necessitates expansion of capital, necessitates clear-cut property rights and markets driven by competition. The outcomes of such a process of capitalist development are:

1. Accumulation of wealth,
2. Intensification of unlimited productivity,
3. Integrating all cultures and nations into one world and
4. Exploding communication - acceleration.

All these continue without any end and without any point of satisfaction. There is no cultural or normative ceiling on the amount of economic gains individuals can aspire. While the elites make gains, the masses are forced to sacrifice for the stability of the system. Competition is only a license for the big actors to improve their position at the expense of others. In capitalism, development is a process of

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Memorial Tribute to Bishop Masilamani Azariah

“Not to be served but to serve”

Samuel Jacob

(Second and concluding part of excerpts from the memorial tribute paid during the 24th Convocation of the Academy of Ecumenical Indian Theology and Church Administration held at Chennai on 12 Jan. 2013.)

Azariah - a Theological Activist

In the past, the theologians articulated their theologies based on western theological notions and the Brahmanical traditions. In the beginning of the 70's, the Indian theologians entered into a new theological paradigm known as "third world theology." However many of those Indian scholars held their allegiance to the Latin American "Liberation Theology", so that their theologies were based on issues of class rather than issues of caste. They failed to see the struggles of the Dalits for liberation as a subject matter appropriate for doing theology in India. At this juncture Dr. K. Rajaratnam, A.P. Nirmal, M.E. Prabhakar, Azariah and a few friends put their minds together and took initiative in formulating and expounding an authentic Indian Christian Theology, called Dalit Theology. Azariah believed Dalit theology is genuinely a theology of the people. He was convinced that the 4th Chapter of St. John's Gospel was the foundational paradigm for Dalit theology. Bishop Azariah proposed three tasks and goals

Theology is a political language. What do people think about God, Jesus Christ and the Church cannot be separated from their own social and political status in a given society. Azariah firmly believed that the God of the Bible is the God of liberation and reflected his faith in the context of the social apartheid in India - Dalits.

for Dalit theology. 1. Motivate all the victims of caste discrimination and oppression; 2. Revolt against ideas and beliefs that enslaved them to live in segregated quarters as outcasts and second class citizens in their own mother land; 3. Facilitate every Dalit individual and community towards struggle for liberation. Impressed by his faith and revolutionary social activities V.T. Rajasekhar called him the "The Black Bishop of Madras and India's top most Dalit theologian, Christian and an Ambedkarite."

Bishop Azariah was a biblical scholar and theologian. His interpretation of the Biblical message was unique and always relevant to the society. His guru and friend Dr. K. Rajaratnam always appreciated and shared Azariah's uncompromising stand in doing justice to the oppressed as a mark of true discipleship to Christ. Recognizing his biblical and theological scholarship and his service to the Church and the society, the Virginia Theological Seminary in the U.S. conferred on him a honorary degree of Doctorate in Divinity.

A true scholar as he was, he diagnosed the psychological implications of oppression and

used the novel concept of a "Wounded Psyche" to express the dilemma of being a Dalit. Wounded Psyche is pollution in the soul. It stems from "deeper, invisible, hidden malice of low self image and utter lack of self respect, hopelessness about one's own future, inertia and apathy that characterize one's own outlook and attitude to life in relation to fellow human beings, or the environment, or nature, or even to one's own Creator."

At the decadal conference of the World Council of Churches held at Vancouver, Canada, in 1983, Bishop Azariah challenged the delegates "First cast out the caste devil from the church before casting out the devil from the society." He paved the way for opening the Dalit Desk in the World Council of Churches. He continued his crusade against caste oppression in international forums and encouraged a discussion on caste at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. He arranged two mass rallies demanding justice and action by the Parliament for Dalit Christians, in New Delhi (1994) and in Chennai (1995).

Azariah - Servant of the Lord

Azariah lived and fulfilled the

words of Jesus: "Not to be served but to serve." After completing his theological training in the UTC, Bangalore, he was ordained as Deacon in 1962 and as Presbyter in 1963. J. R. Chandran, the Principal of the UTC once said, "M. Azariah is one of my most distinguished students about whom I am very proud. His functioning with a new style of simplicity shows great promise." He served the church in India for more than four decades in various capacities as Pastor, Youth Director, Director of Community Service Centre, Secretary for Christian Education with the NCCI, Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Auxiliary of the Bible Society of India, General Secretary of the Synod of the Church of South India and the Bishop of Madras Diocese. One of Bishop's major books written in his retirement was "Dream and Reality - CSI after 60 Years." In this book he discussed the state of church in recent times and exposed the allegations of corruption, nepotism and abuse of power and position. Bishop Azariah remained a servant of God, an upright and fearless man, friend of the oppressed, affectionate human being to all and a visionary leader for all who cared to learn from his example and serve fellow humans.

"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith". Hebrews 13:7.

-(The Rev. Samuel Jacob is a Senior Pastor of the CSI Madras Diocese and a former Clergy Secretary of the Diocese).



If you are
IN NO SENSE
you can't claim
to have
INNOCENCE !

Serampore College (University) Convocation Address

Witness to God's purpose for humans and creations

H. S. Wilson

The Serampore College Convocation-2013 was held at The Academy of Integrated Christian Studies at Aizawl, Mizoram on 10 Feb. The Rev. Dr. H.S. Wilson, the Executive Director of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia and Visiting Professor at Karnataka College, Mangalore, delivered the Convocation Address. Second part of the excerpts:

The 38th meeting of the BTESSC and the 87th meeting of the Senate of Serampore College and Convocation was hosted by the Academy of Integrated Christian Studies (AICS), Shekina Hill, Aizawl, Mizoram from 6 – 10 February 2013.

In theological exploration we are in a challenging situation of needing to be multilingual (not in the sense of competency in languages but dealing with different genres of theologies).

In late sixties when I did my theological studies most of us could afford only to be bilingual in theology. We were mostly taught western theologies and as required by the Senate syllabus we were taught only a couple of courses geared to the Indian situation at UTC, Bangalore. My classmates who came from Syrian orthodox tradition were trilingual with insights from Syrian Christian tradition. But today you are

The goal of theology is not to limit itself to discourses on God's love, mercy and compassion but to provide a faith-orientation in order that those offerings/gifts of God be relished by all humans and God's entire creation.

multilingual dealing simultaneously with a variety of theological expressions such as Western, Eastern, Indian, Asian, African and contextual theologies like liberation theologies from Latin America and other Christian communities, Dalit, Adivasi, feminist, womanist, Minjung, Black (African American), ecology. However, the challenge is to be intentional about it and pursue the path of 'inclusive theologians', facilitating each of these theologies, informing and enriching each other rather than keeping them in different compartments as done in subject catalogues and shelving the books of different areas of knowledge in separate library racks. If one deals with these expressions of theologies as isolated explorations, the fragmented approach (in the name of narrow contextuality) will lead to fragmentation in theology (my community's theology over yours) and inevitably contribute to fragmented Christianity.

In ministry you are in the frontier of human history confronting challenges and issues that call for responses including faith response. By drawing on Christian tradition as well as new insights that emerge from the faith communities inspired by the Spirit, new theologies are constructed to uphold the gospel mandate of

wholeness of life for all. The goal of theology is not to limit itself to discourses on God's love, mercy and compassion but to provide a faith-orientation in order that those offerings/gifts of God be relished by all humans and God's entire creation.

Theological exploration is not there to provide a sanctuary from the harsh realities of life. It is there to confront such realities and provide faith-based alternatives as Christians perceive it in the life and ministry of Jesus while being open to other faith and secular perspectives. Your ministry, theology incubator will provide you ample challenges and possibilities in the years and decades ahead of you.

Pursuit with creative imagination and wisdom:

Religious founders and reformers were people of creative imagination and wisdom. Jesus constantly challenged people to be innovative about the way God relates to humanity and all creation. Jesus invited his hearers not to be slaves to conventional wisdom but think of alternative possibilities for making a difference in their lives and the lives of their neighbors. The gospels recorded the alternative that Jesus was proposing as: "But I say to you"

(Matt 5:21f). The objective of Jesus was not to throw away the past tradition but reorienting them with new vitality. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill". (Matt. 5:17).

Jesus was a genius in communicating the alternatives through parables, examples from nature, his interactions with individuals outside of his social circles, and acts of miracles. **Jesus was unique in motivating his disciples and followers to new understandings of scriptures and traditions for the sake of dismantling social barriers and opening their minds and eyes to the liberation of people from all types of bondages as a witness to God's purposes for humans and creation.** One could say that a good deal of such imagination and wisdom emerged out of his ministry of carrying out the will of God. Thus Jesus became God's wisdom to humanity. Even people of other faiths find it easy to accept Jesus as a sage/guru with enormous ability to communicate the truth about life.

Religions have a tendency to transpose the teachings of their religious leaders often straightforward to metaphysical formulas. As a result the understanding of God becomes

a daunting task of going through a series of metaphysical concepts and relation with God becomes possible by submitting to prescribed rites and rituals of a given religion. As Christians we make a lot of references to God in what we do in our ministry and mission. Miroslav Volf notes that "[O]ften, it does not take even a mind trained in the school of the great masters of suspicion taught—Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud—to notice that we use God to achieve our own ecclesiastical or political ends rather than aligning these ends with God's purposes". I am not undermining the rich Christian theological traditions and gems of truth they embody. I am referring to the fact that when one mentions the subject theology the general tendency of most laity is to distance themselves from it as they consider theology as something inaccessible to them unless they are trained like their clergy. On the other hand the sheer need to have a faith base to deal with ones personal, family and community life compels people to come up with their own way of appropriating and aligning with different theological options available to them.

I would like to classify Christians from their theological alignment into three groups for the purpose of presentation. One may find such a mix among Christians where they are in

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Civil Economy instead of Immoral Economy

Create and defend the commons

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expansion of market relations that depends mainly on credit, which is an institutionalized social relationship that serves to pull the proceeds from future economic activities into the present. Politics is used as a vehicle for disembedding the economy.

Financial markets

Financial markets help maximization of individual interests without any moral bindings. This provides a differentiated self-referential and self-reproducing system with legal support. We must keep in mind that in the financial market, economic activities are motivated only by material self interests. People should be taught that financial markets give shape to a world without moral grounds.

Civil Economy

Capitalism never evolved autonomously. The extension of the market relations and the inversion of all goods and

In the financial market, economic activities are motivated only by material self interests. People should be taught that financial markets give shape to a world without moral grounds.

relations into commodities confront the self protection of the society, says, Polanyi. People are defending themselves against the reduction of their selves to a commodity. Everywhere in history, people are pushing forward human relations and communal ties against the 'dreadmills' of capitalist principles, to build a moral economy. There are spaces for morality in economic activities: In fulfilling contracts/ 'trusts', and in respecting rules of fairness and good conscience/ faire trade etc.

Establishing, stabilizing and fostering trust in economic deals is highly valuable; and a good investment for successful economic co-operation. What one pays for one's enterprise and work culture is essential for success. Different brands of capitalism differ in respect of the degree of the freedom of markets, the role of the state and

the degree of autonomy of the market, the size of welfare activities in a country, the degree of inequality, the actual function of moral attitudes and the conditions of human rights. Since the welfare state 'in principle' is operating outside the capitalist economy, it helps people to live outside the "dreadmill". At the same time, this gives freedom and legitimacy for capital accumulation.

What we call real estate is actually a piece of ecology which is deeply connected with the life of human beings. To take out this piece and expose it to a market is one of the most absurd projects. If individual ownership of land is the core of capitalism; we must reject that system; said, Julius K. Nyerere. Because, in Africa, land was always recognized as belonging to the community. We need independent institutions with the

responsibility to control consumption of ecology. Through emission trading, costs of ecology consumed should be realized. Creating and defending commons should be another agenda to establish civic economy.

Through a system of societal regulation economic efficiency can be enhanced along with preservation of the ecology. This is the crux of moral economy, which has to be embodied in political institutions. There should be more discussion on the nature of "public global goods" and the way to guard them through international standards. Only moral economy will be sustainable. In order to establish a moral economy, we have to prepare its institutional frame work and principles. Then it will be a civil economy too.

Civilising the economy

Today, the capitalist culture-

especially the consumerist culture, has already eliminated any space to inject moral considerations in capitalism. In fact, the modern consumer and communication cultures have transcended even religions. Although this appears as a discouraging situation, we have to build a moral economy by civilizing the economy. In order to achieve this task, we are called to strengthen the autonomy of the workers, promote a culture of co-operative enterprises, undertake transformative investments, empower the consumers and educate the entrepreneurs. Along with this, we should take efforts to rationalize the communities on: property rights vs commons, permissible limits of integration with financial markets, limits and use of mobility and communication, reduction of clientelism and reduction of corruption.

—Dr. Gerhard Wegner is the Director of the Institute of Social Studies of the Protestant Churches in Germany.

Central Government Budget 2013-14

The Budget takes no notice of the growing inequalities

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Avoidance Rules (GAAR) is postponed to April 1, 2016 evidently to help certain companies.

PR: Next to oil, the steep rise in the cost of import of gold is the cause of growing CAD. As import of gold is not essential either for the consumption of the general public or for industrial growth, everybody expected that the FM would introduce some control over its import. But, he refused to suggest any step in this regard. Your comment, please?

■ This question is related to the previous question. That the Finance Minister "refused to suggest any step in this regard" is not correct. The decision to introduce inflation-indexed bonds to wean investors away from gold is a very welcome step. However, it is important to note that the love for the yellow metal is built into Indian psyche and it is demanded not merely as a hedge against inflation but as a preferred saving and as a matter of pride. The demand for gold is unproductive and discourages household savings and Finance Minister ought to have restricted the quantity of gold imports by quantitative restriction or at least by raising import duty well above 6%. The rise in duty-free

The massive pumping in of agricultural credit to the order of Rs.7 lakh crore (there is a 56% increase in the non-performing assets of agricultural loans) will not do the trick on agricultural production.

exemption (upto Rs.1 lakh for women passengers) to passengers importing gold, is foolish as it may become an easy avenue for *benami* imports and pave way for corruption. It appears that largely because of rising oil and gold imports, India's CAD was at a record high of 5.4% of GDP in the second quarter of the current fiscal and that calls for drastic remedies.

PR: Fiscal deficit at 5.2% of GDP is one of the twin causes of macro-economic imbalance in the economy. Do you think that the budget proposes effective measures to tackle this problem?

■ I, for one, do not think that fiscal deficit *per se* is a vice to be avoided. Those who believe that a reduction in public sector expenditure can create space for market, will always argue for fiscal balance as a virtue. Revenue deficit has to be contained. It is only prudence and logic. Why reduce fiscal deficit in so far as you generate growth and productivity with it. That is the

key. But reducing current fiscal deficit to 5.2% by cutting plan expenditure to the tune of Rs. 91, 000 crore is a danger signal that people should sit back and reflect and resist strongly.

Coming to the question whether the deficit can be kept at 4.8% of GDP for 2013-14, I can bet, it is not going to happen. From the current 5% growth the target of 6.7% is a 35% margin, an impossible long jump. The additional tax revenue targetted to be mobilised is only Rs.18,000 crore, a drop in the ocean of fiscal deficit. Moreover, while some of the revenue projections like a 16.9% growth in corporate tax collections, Rs. 55,814 crore receipts from disinvestment and Rs.40,847 crores from spectrum, are unrealistic and not going to be realised, several items like Rs. 10,000 crore proposed for Food Security legislation, subsidies on food etc., are under-provided.

PR: What would be the inflationary pressures and potential of this budget?

■ Inflation notably the consumer price index (reference to which the Finance Minister studiously avoided) are already in the danger zones. Though the frequent and uncertain hike in fuel prices and railway goods traffic rates inflation is now built into the economic system. At the same time efforts to address the supplyside constraints leave many things to be desired. If past is any indication, the massive pumping in of agricultural credit to the order of Rs.7 lakh crore (there is a 56% increase in the non-performing assets of agricultural loans) will not do the trick on agricultural production. However this is not to ignore some innovative proposals to boost agricultural production and agri-business in the budget.

PR: This budget has been hailed as a women-friendly budget. Do you agree?

I do not agree. The Nirbhaya Fund and Women Bank are no new ideas. Kerala has already launched a Nirbhaya Project to fight atrocities against women. I

don't know whether a Women Bank can be truly empowering. Are we to believe that women are discriminated in ordinary banks and therefore need protection and care? Even so the project is to be welcomed for enhancing women welfare amenities rather than their real empowerment. Gender justice in a patriarchal society is an altogether different policy fish and no strategic programme or intervention is envisaged in the budget in this respect.

PR: What in your opinion is the greatest omission of this budget which you would like to mention?

■ I think the most serious omission is that the Budget takes no notice of the growing inequalities in income, consumption and wealth in India. The 10% cess on super rich is not a serious effort. The tax-GDP ratio target of the budget for 2013-14 is only 10.4% as against over 34% in Brazil which also is an admittedly unequal society and an ally in the BRIC conclave.

This blatant disregard of the inequality dimension poses a dangerous portent for the future of the country that craves for an equitable social order.

Serampore College (University) Convocation Address

Re-imagine the emergence of Indian Christianity

>>> *Contd. from Page 4 Col 5*

large numbers particularly in urban areas. These groups I would like to name as *Christ-centered universalists*— those who are open to insights from other religious traditions in India and inputs from other branches of knowledge. They appreciate the Christian faith but critically question some of the tenets of Christianity which excludes others or creates barriers between Christians and others. They do not wish to speak about their theological views openly with the fear of being misconstrued as unbelievers. They continue as active members of their congregations often for the sake of their families and social belonging.

Neo-spiritualists—for them Christianity is all about spirituality. They are predominantly concerned with the spiritual dimension/powers of Christianity and want to have access to it and to live by it. They have the tendency to assess all aspects of life from the perspective of it being from the

Since biblical and historical theologies are foundations to any Christian community, can Indian Christians re-imagine and re-conceive the Indian church as an intercontextual ecclesial community anchored in intercontextual theologies transcending the fragmentations that have contributed to multi Christian communities.

Spirit of God or evil powers. One finds among them a strong sense of Christian superiority and exclusivism. Some of them may continue their membership in their traditional congregations while maintaining an active relationship with the neo-spiritual communities for their spiritual needs. Their concern for continued spiritual renewal and the spreading of their brand of Christianity is manifested in organizing Christian crusades and spiritual renewal meetings often led by independent preachers and evangelists from India and overseas.

Traditional churchists—those who like to continue with the tradition they grew up with a little change that are sometimes inevitable due to change of time and socio-cultural practices in the larger society. Many of them may not be regular participants in the activities of the

congregation but their commitment to protect the tradition is unshakeable. They relate to Christianity as a folk religion as it provides the needed socio-cultural identity to the community. Sometimes their collective practices may involve competing or imitating the neighboring religious communities with posh church buildings, pompous celebration of feasts and events to maintain the status quo of Christianity as a religious tradition.

Christianity is not only a faith community but also a socio-cultural community. Division that exists within a faith community is not unique to Christianity. It is found in almost all religions. However, these divisions call for imaginative solutions. In ecumenical gatherings sometimes it is said that in Asia (India) there is Christianity but not necessarily Asian (Indian)

Christianity. If that is the case, one possibility is about reimagining the emergence of Indian Christianity with different traditional and contextual theologies coexisting in a non-dominating relationship, and developing a spirit of mutuality for dismantling the existing barriers between groups. The Indian ethos of religious tolerance (which is also eroding) and elasticity regarding the ultimate questions about life may pervade such an Indian Christianity.

Drawing on the discussion above on intercontextual theology, one possibility of emergence of Indian Christianity may be through a process of promotion of intercontextual ecclesial community. Our forebears accepted the church traditions and denominations that were handed over to them without any serious discourse on preferred indigenous ecclesial structure

and operation. Regrettably, those Christians who had attempted indigenous forms of Christianity were ostracized. Since biblical and historical theologies are foundations to any Christian community, can Indian Christians re-imagine and re-conceive the Indian church as an intercontextual ecclesial community anchored in intercontextual theologies transcending the fragmentations that have contributed to multi Christian communities as it exists in India and world over? Is it too much of a utopian projection?⁵ Growing up in the 70s a song by John Lennon *Imagine*⁶ expressed such a daring spirit of the possibility of eliminating greed, hunger, war, even proposing the demise of separate countries, so that humans can live as one family. Humans have not reached those ideal goals.

To be continued

Jonathan N. Gnanadason passes away on 24 Feb. 2013

Remembering Jonathan

George Mathew

"I remember his father Bishop Gnanadason telling me a basic principle in life: "Life is Meeting"

"Hello George, Hello Sheela, how are you?" These were the last words Sheela, my wife, and I heard from Jonathan on his sick bed last Saturday when we visited him at his home in Chennai. As always, he said it with his unique, pleasant smile. For us, our visit to Chennai last week-end to see Jonathan can never be forgotten. The next day when the sad news of Jonathan's demise reached us, it shook us beyond words.

When I entered the Ecumenical Christian Centre campus, Whitefield in June 1970 to join there as programme secretary, it was Jonathan who received me. The four creative years I spent there in Jonathan's company - the discussions and arguments we both used to have with MA Thomas Achen, the new programmes we planned, the people we met, the community life we built there, the travels we made for the programmes, the ideas and actions we shared- all these, in a sense made our destiny as well.

Jonathan marrying Aruna was another happy event for me. When I was actively associated with the SCM in Bangalore, Aruna was a dynamic young leader there.

The long letter he typed and sent me and Sheela on 20 August 1974, after a few days of our leaving ECC and reaching Delhi, says it all. "Even though we got used to the idea of you leaving the Centre, as and when the reality came, it was a disturbing factor..... It was an emotional moment at the [Railway] station, but then I take these moments as something we have to quietly face with a hope that we will have one more opportunity to meet and may be even work together sometime." When I plunged into establishing an institution which was only an idea, his hope was realised. Jonathan was a great inspiration and guide for me from Chennai and Geneva. We could work together in many areas of



common concern.

What did Jonathan the optimist, value most? Human relationship. I remember his father Bishop Gnanadason telling me a basic principle in life: "Life is Meeting"

How he looked at the future generation? He wrote in the same letter mentioned above: "Don't worry about Anand [1yr. 7 month old], he will adopt himself to the surrounding much better than you people will do."

When Jonathan and Aruna were in Chennai and then in Geneva, their home was also our home.

Jonathan's compassion for the poor, intellectual pursuits and writings (the articles he wrote in *Economic and Political weekly* and *Religion and Society* as early as 1969, 70 need special mention here), organisational skills, down to earth approach had made him an icon of human development of our times.

Aruna told me over phone that when Jonathan was diagnosed with the incurable illness last August, Jonathan told her that he would not need any modern medical treatment. That was the first time I was hearing a knowledgeable person saying this. Jonathan's view was: 'The time has come, I will go'. I salute Jonathan, the bold man.

When I was leaving Chennai home Aruna gave me a book; **The Life Enveloped in Love and Grace** Biographical Sketch of

Jonathan N. Gnanadason By A. Mahaboob Batcha (SOCO Trust, Madurai). What a wonderful tribute to a humble man who has created history in those neglected areas with his loving, passionate approach and global world view! As Mehboob Batcha says, "Jonathan is a rare friend and rare human being full of compassion and passion for action".

Let me conclude by quoting a poem he wrote after seeing the slum areas of Madras where dead bodies are usually laid in the open air under a temporary thatched roof.

She had no roof over her head

She was born on a rainy night

And she had no roof over her head

As a child she was naked and playful

And she had no roof over her head

Young and frail she grew to her womanhood

And she had no roof over her head

As a young woman she lived on the street

And she had no roof over her head

I saw her sick and lonely lying on the pavement

And she still had no roof over her head

And at the end I saw her young and dead body

And she had a roof over her head

Yes, at last she had a roof over her head.

While paying our homage to the poet Jonathan, the good Samaritan, the man with milk of human kindness, my love and thoughts are with Aruna, Chitharanjan and Uday.

2 March 2013

— **Dr. George Mathew is the Chairman of the NEWS Trust and the Chairman of the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi.**

Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA)

Living with God in the context of HIV and AIDS

"Christian theology regarding all people as created in God's image can help overcome the HIV and AIDS pandemic", said Prof. Musa W. Dube, former consultant of the Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) in a recent interview.

From the Interview:

How is HIV affecting communities in Africa and what are its gender dynamics?

Musa Dube said, "The HIV and AIDS trauma has written itself on the bodies and souls of African communities. Yet, I must say it has also awakened their compassionate and communal energies".

"Gender is one of the structural dimensions of HIV and AIDS. The pandemic has brought gender inequalities forcefully to the forefront, forcing communities to think more carefully about male-centred gender relations and the need to re-imagine our relations from justice-loving perspectives that embrace all genders".

HIV and AIDS have made African communities begin difficult discussions about varieties of sexual identities that exist, beyond conventional understanding of gender relations. It has assisted men in welcoming conversations about the meaning of manhood and how to re-construct troubling masculinities.

What more do you think churches need to do in their response to HIV?

Churches need to commit to place HIV and AIDS at the top of their programme agendas. This is because the struggle to overcome HIV is not over; rather, it continues. To respond to this pandemic, leaders in churches can engage the energies of lay persons in their congregations. Theologically, churches can make a contribution by adopting perspectives that assist members in regarding all people as "made in God's image and blessed to be fruitful". The creation perspective can put an end to the long persistent ghost of HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination. The theology of creation can assist in embracing adherence to antiretroviral drugs.

Dube, a feminist theologian from Botswana and author of several books on HIV, Christian theology and justice issues, worked with EHAIA, a project of the World Council of Churches, from 2000 to 2004.

Please Note: For space constraints we regret that we are unable to publish, in this issue, the continuation of the papers "Political Economy of Gender and Climate Change" by Vibhuti Patel and "Chained to Change the Horizons" by Subin John Mathew.

Form IV

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V. C. John
Signature of the Publisher

Lotika Sarkar passes away on 23 Feb. 2013

Lotikadee, torch bearer of gender justice

Vibhuti Patel

Prof. Lotika Sarkar (1927-2013) who played a central role in several path-breaking and crucial legislations for gender justice and empowerment of women during 1975-2005, passed away at the age of 86 on 23rd Feb. In the women's rights movement, she was known as Lotikadee.

She was the first Indian woman to graduate from Cambridge. Lotikadee was in the

peak of her career, when she was asked to join Committee on Status of Women in India, 1972 that prepared Towards Equality Report, 1974.

Lotikadee was a conscience keeper not only for policy makers and legal fraternity but also for women's studies scholars and women's movement activists. The most appropriate tribute to Lotikadee is to proactively

pursue the mission she started with her team in 1980 to fight against rape and various forms of structural and systemic violence against women and to strive for social justice, distributive justice and gender justice.

Let us salute Lotikadee, torchbearer of gender justice by continuing her heroic legacy.



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Mammen Varkey

"Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here, while I go yonder and pray'. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.' And going a little further he fell on his face and prayed, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt'....."

—Matthew 26: 36 – 46

It is a narrative reflected upon invariably during the Passion Week but quite often, it is very inadequately understood and most often, the crux of the narrative is missed.

A Reflection for the Passion Week

The prayer in Gethsemane was not for that!

Most unfortunately, Jesus' cry in Gethsemane, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me....." is interpreted as a prayer to the Father to spare him from the thorny way of the cross and the impending death. This common interpretation would create the impression that Jesus was afraid of death and was hesitant to be killed. No. The crux of the prayer is totally missed in such interpretations.

Jesus was deeply concerned about two things

First, he had come to usher in the kingdom of God. "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand;". Mark 1: 14, 15 (RSV). And at the beginning of his public ministry itself he had rejected the path of miracles and of uncritical embrace and use of the worldly power for ushering in the kingdom of God, that is the reign of God. Rf. Matt. 4: 1 – 11. He knew well, at that stage, the path he had followed, would take him to his certain death; that is, to the end of his mission. It should be noted well. So the life and death

question that stared at him was whether he should make a path-correction, not to save his life, but for the certainty of ushering in of the kingdom of God. And he wanted an answer from his Father to that question.

Secondly, in the mission of ushering in the kingdom of God, one supremely important step that he had taken was that he selected twelve persons, "to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons". Mark 3: 14, 15. He did hope that they would be with him on all occasions, however dangerous they may be. Also that in case an occasion arose when he had to make an exit from the earth, they would continue 'the preaching' of the good news, that is, they would continue the work for the ushering in of the kingdom of God. Now, he realized that the twelve were not convinced of his 'path' for the ushering in of the Kingdom of God. He told it at their face, "You will all fall away because of me this night;....." Matt. 26: 31.

An expression of their dissociation

As he entered Gethsemane he did not feel confident to take all of the disciples along with him. He left the majority of them

behind; they had, already dissociated themselves from his choice of the path. He took only three; Peter, James and John. They went a little farther. Then Jesus told them, "My soul is very sorrowful even to death; remain here, and watch with me". He alone went farther "fell on his face and prayed", "My father,....., let this cup pass from me,....." Matt. 26: 39. He went back to the three and found them sleeping. It was a heart breaking sight. The three slept not mainly because of exhaustion but as an expression of their dissociation with this Master's way, the path of the Cross. Jesus went back and prayed. The prayer was more intense. "The disciples are deserting. I will be dead. Who would continue the work?" So he prayed again, ".....if this cannot pass unless I drink....." His main question to the Father was, who would continue the work of ushering in the Kingdom, the rule of God. Very importantly, his prayer did not wake the three up. They had rejected the path of the Cross!

A new revelation

Jesus went and prayed, a third time. He wept. He came to a new realization. The Parent God convinced him the only way

to the kingdom of God was the way of the Cross and assured him that his death would not be the end of the spread of the 'Good News' and the ushering in of the kingdom of God. The Son was reassured. It was a revelation, yet again to him. The Kingdom of God would be ushered in only through the path of the Cross.

Jesus, the Master and the Lord, is asking all his disciples and the church, now too, to 'watch' and pray. That is to join with him in his journey along the path of the cross. But, clearly, the believers and the church are 'sleeping'. We are refusing to be awake and to be with him on the path of the cross. What the Father told His Beloved Son was for ushering in the kingdom of God, the Cross could not be avoided; self emptying, could not be bypassed. But, so sadly, we have, already, embraced 'Mammon' and might; power and violence for bringing in the kingdom of God!

Our meditations during the Lent and the Passion Week must help us to discern that self emptying is the only way, for individuals and churches; institutions and nations for ushering in the Kingdom, the will and reign of God. ●

Lenten Reflections

Make authentic relationship with people

>>> *Contd. from Page 2 Col 4 (kata pneuma)*, leads to the fulfillment of God's ultimate plan revealed in Christ.

The fruits of the Holy Spirit listed in Gal. 5:22 speaks of 3-fold relationship: God, others and self. They mirror the face of Jesus in us. It is a divine imperative for us "not to get conformed to the world, but to get transformed by the renewal of mind" (Rom. 12:3). The gospel-ethics meets people in their very core of existence and enables them to fulfill the divine plan through the ministry of reconciliation. The basic question is this: whether the spirituality practised by the individuals and groups serve that purpose. St. Paul reminds us as God's chosen one, holy and beloved, clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility... clothing ourselves with love. (Col. 3:12-14).

Spirituality as human bonding

Spirituality has an inter-religious dimension as truth, goodness and sanctity are not the monopolies of one religion. In his Chicago address, (1893) Swami Vivekananda makes this point in a powerful way. In Hinduism spirituality is related to the four stages of one's spiritual pilgrimage in life. Prayer, meditation, contemplation, silence, worship, service, pilgrimage to holy places and giving gifts of charity are means of spiritual formation in one's life

A new understanding of Jesus' table fellowship with the people, sets norms for a new spirituality.

and in relationships. The five pillars of Islam also speak of spiritual growth in one's life. The Sufi tradition in Islam also gives its stress on personal purification. The noble traits of Buddhism well stated in terms of wisdom and compassion and their bearing on the Four Noble truths speak of spiritual attainment.

As members of the Church what is required today is to seek for a common platform and see whether there is a point of convergence in the affirmation of moral and ethical principles without denying the truth of God's revelation in Christ. In this way we shall explore the nature of Christian spirituality and its implications for a holistic living. The periods of consolidation in mission is over, but the *kairos* of comprehension has come. In building up communities rooted in love and justice, there is a genuine urge to move from religion to its spirituality. In religion the accent falls on God, where as in spirituality relationship with people. Sri Sri Ravishankar calls it, "the real essence of religion". The symbols and practices are like a banana skin, and the spiritual values - the quest for truth and the awareness of human dignity and human rights are like the banana fruit inside. It is a pity

that people in every tradition have thrown away the banana and are holding on to the skin. Religion is time-bound and spirituality is timeless or eternal. What is required today is to affirm shared values.

In seeking a new way of being the Church, we need not have to speak more of the boundaries that separate people from people but to discover the common bonds that unite us as humans and other living beings in God's universe. The imagery of a river flowing may make better sense. A river that flows assimilates and absorbs everything with a high sense of comprehension. If this is done, "following Jesus", becomes a possibility for all. In such an attitude, "streams of awareness" emerge from the depth of togetherness. New life in Christ makes life qualitatively different for all.

House-hold ethics of Jesus

In a new understanding of Jesus' table fellowship with the people, sets norms for a new spirituality in the life of the disciples. Whoever, sits at the table with Jesus must also accept the other guests in Christ's company. No one can have Jesus for oneself alone; he is met with a strange entourage. In the Gospels, Jesus is met with

a strange entourage- the publicans and the sinners, the poor from the hedges and byways, a notorious woman whom Jesus permitted to touch his feet, the prodigal sons and such cowardly and treacherous disciples as Judas and the other disciples who fled at the crisis moment. None of whom loved him enough to arrange his funeral. As Marcus Barth puts it, "whoever considers those table companies of Jesus too bad, too base, too little and too far removed from salvation does not know Jesus as he really is!"

The Risen Christ also bids his disciples to make authentic relationship with people in the community. In the post-resurrection appearance of Christ, we do notice the marvels of spirituality in its depth. In addressing Mary by name, Jesus asks us to keep the human face in all relationships. The Risen Christ establishes his relationship in diverse ways. i) as communicating Christ (on the road to Emmaus with two disciples) ii) as comforting Christ in the midst of the disciples who are afraid of the Jews iii) as confronting Christ in the company of the disciples (Jn. 21) by eating with the deserted disciples iv) as the commissioning Christ. These are the various models for the

Church today to undertake God's way of dealing with people in the contemporary society.

The Rev. Dr. M. J. Joseph is former Professor and Principal of the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam and former Director, ECC, Bangalore. ●



When you live with CHARITY and CHASTITY UR in the CHURCH!

International Joint Programme Andhra Christian Theological College & Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago



Andhra Christian Theological College (ACTC) and Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago (LSTC) jointly organized an international programme at ACTC from January 16 to 21, 2013.

Lectures were delivered by the ACTC Faculty. The Rev. S. Vijayakumari Joseph gave a lecture on "Women's leadership in the Church", the Rev. Dr. T. Mathew Emmanuel on "Dalit Theology" and Rev. Dr. Ch. Vasantha Rao, Principal, ACTC, on "Ecology" and "Indigenization".

Two public lectures were also arranged. Dr. Vedanayagamony spoke on "Our Cry in the Wilderness: the Origins, Originality and Oddity of Sudra Lutherans in AELC". Dr. Mark Swanson from LSTC and Director for the Center for Christian Muslim Engagement gave a lecture on the theme, "The Ways and Wherefores of Interfaith Engagement"

This international joint programme has opened a new chapter in the history of ACTC and has facilitated ongoing relationship between these two institutions. —ACTC News

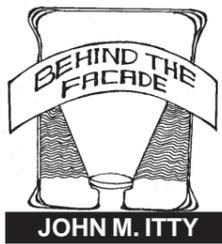
Wesley Ariarajah invites theological renewal

Theologian S. Wesley Ariarajah's new book *Your God, My God, Our God*, published by the WCC, asks, "How does theology come to terms with the fact that our neighbours pray and believe differently from us?"

Ariarajah says that an authentic contemporary faith must search for new concepts to articulate its central mysteries. The distinctiveness of his book, lies in its "comprehensive attempt to rethink the Christian faith," taking the whole interlocking constellation of Christian doctrines together.

"You cannot conceptualize the faith for all times," asserts Ariarajah, but instead must be willing to re-conceive the faith in ways that answer one's contemporary context.

Ariarajah is professor of ecumenical theology at Drew University, United States. He is former director of the inter-religious dialogue programme and deputy general secretary of the WCC. He has authored several books, including *The Bible and People of Other Faiths* and *Not without My Neighbour*.



Conceptualization of 'Development as Freedom' by Amartya Sen is acclaimed as the best articulation of development. But, the beauty and philosophical merit of this idea is being used to counter the quality of development. It is the concept of individual freedom that serves as the corner-stone of neoliberal policies, that nourishes development through deprivation of millions.

The project of development relying on the Market mechanism, supplemented by fiscal and monetary interventions by the state has proved to be crisis ridden; causing deprivation of millions. In fact, for promoting development, the government uses its freedom /right to oppress the people. Both the market and democratic governments that claim credibility in the name of freedom and proclaim commitment to promote development push more people to the world of unfreedom. Therefore, those who are concerned about genuine development have to discern the danger in upholding the merit of freedom.

It is by witnessing this scenario, in his critique of growth-based development, Amartya Sen condemned reliance on political repression both by authoritarian and democratically elected governments to achieve high rate of economic growth. He exposed how this strategy reduces humanity as a means to achieve the end namely economic

'Development': What is it, for whom and how? - 22

Spirituality as Development; instead of 'Development as Freedom'

growth. Sen argues that freedom should be both the goal and the means of development; and suggests two kinds of freedom: "Development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency..." This should be supplemented with positive freedom that rests on expanding individual's capabilities (abilities) and their functioning (choice), rather than simply their incomes. Genuine human development, according to Sen., therefore, requires removing unfreedoms and facilitating positive liberty-individual's ability to function well in life. He demands State's action in this regard.

By bringing freedom at the centre of development, Sen enriched the content and widened the horizons of development. Without liberation from unfreedoms and provision for positive freedom, development cannot be realized. But, the problem is: how this can be achieved? Sen advocates State's action in this regard. But, whether the State would do this is a million dollar question.

The State has been working as the protector of the interests of the propertied classes; and the neoliberal State has demonstrated openly its bias in favour of freedom for capital, and against that of the labour and the common masses. During the last two decades; especially after hailing the merit of Sen's concept of 'development as freedom', the State, while reserving positive freedom for a small section has been pushing millions of the tribals, fisher people, small and marginal farmers and agricultural workers towards the world of unfreedom, as refugees of development. Therefore, Sen's idea about dispensation of freedom to the people by the State is proved only a pious wish.

Sen wishes and hopes that the Market and the State will provide freedom to the people. But what happens is the contrary. This is the biggest flaw of the theories of freedom. Ben Solwyn argues that Sen's conception of development as the expansion of individual's freedom is internally contradictory, because,

it is based on a liberal conception of capitalist market. How can we expect that the Market and the State that work as the guarantor and protector of the interests of the super rich and the powerful grant freedom to the people? While hailing freedom as the end is desirable, considering freedom as an instrument for development has proved to be dangerous. This shows that we have to uphold a concept superior to freedom. Spirituality is superior to freedom both as the end and means of development. While freedom as an instrument can cause deprivation, spirituality as an instrument of development while preventing the deprivation of any, cares for and carries all.

Spirituality is superior, because, freedom is embedded in it. Further, while freedom is to be granted by the powerful to the powerless, which is unlikely; spirituality is shared and nurtured by all. Again, spirituality of the people that makes the powerless powerful helps to counter the power of the market and the state. In a few earlier pieces, we have found the power of spirituality in the use and conservation of water and energy.

Repair and Restore Relationships



Dr. Jetti A. Oliver opens the discussion. L to R: Rev. Dr. B. J. Christie Kumar, Bishop S. J. Theodore, Rev. Dr. John M. Sutcliffe, Mrs. Ann Sutcliffe, Dr. Indira Vasantha, Dr. Iqbal Ahmed and Mr. Syed S. Hussain

The Andhra Pradesh Council of Churches (APCC) in cooperation with the Christian Education Council of India organized an 'Open House' on "Faith Communities: Strengthening Societal Relationship" on 13 February 2013, at Samanvay, Hyderabad.

Opening the discussion, Dr. Jetti A. Oliver said that the undesirable happenings in and around warranted a re-

envisioning of the role and response of the faith communities. There was an urgent need to strengthen the societal relationships.

Dr. Syed S. Hussain of Jamayet-e-Islam; Bishop S. J. Theodore of CSI, Rev. Dr. Christie Kumar, Professor of Theology; Rev. Dr. G. Babu Rao, St. Paul's Study Centre; Mr. T. S. Kiran Kumar, General Secretary, YMCA; B. K. Gayathri of Brahmakumaris shared their perceptions on promoting societal relationships.

Mrs. Ann Sutcliffe, Dr. Indira Vasantha, Bishop S. J. Theodore and Mrs. Ratnavathi lighted the Lamp formally inaugurating the Open House.

—G. Babu Rao
Programme Coordinator,
APCC

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