

News and Comments

Annual Meeting of Moral Theologians

The annual meeting of the Association of Moral Theologians of India (AMTI) was held at St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI), Kottayam, Kerala, during October 4-6, 1996. On the opening day *Dr. Kuriakose Kunnacherry*, Bishop of Kottayam, presided over the Eucharistic Concelebration in the Syro-Malabar liturgy.

The theme chosen this year for study was the ethical/moral aspects of the phenomenon of Globalization and the New Economic Policy being implemented by the Government of India. Three Papers were presented at the meeting and there followed an in-depth discussion on the topics studied. *Dr. Jose Fonseca, CSsR*, spoke on "The Globalization of Business - An Ethical Inquiry with Special Reference to India". He traced the origin and development of Globalization and analysed the Indian situation. He stressed that there is a bright side and dark side to Globalization. By way of conclusion he said: "An adequate moral solution will be found in upholding values which are compatible with good business and curb 'ugly' capitalism".

From a different perspective *Dr. John Chathanatt, SJ*, analyzed the various aspects of the New Economic Policy (NEP) being pursued by the Indian Government since July 1991. Basing his valuation on reliable economic data provided by the Government of India, Chathanatt established that in India "poverty has increased as a direct consequence of NEP". India is gradually being caught up in a "dept trap" which is really a "death trap". India's total debt service as percentage of exports of goods and services rose from 9.3 in 1980 to 30.7 in 1991. As of March 1995 India has a total debt amounting to 99.04 billion dollars. A moral valuation of the economic reality must be based on verifiable, empirical data and value principles, he pointed out.

A third paper titled "The Impact of Tourism on the Culture of Developing Countries - An Ethical Inquiry" was presented by *Dr. Socorro Rosario Antonio Mendes*. Modern tourism has certainly many positive aspects but it has been severely affected by the growing phenomenon of Globalization, consumerism, depletion of natural resources, hedonism, drug abuse, disdain toward the cultural values and ethos of peoples, sexual exploitation of children, etc. Describing the tourist "onslaught" particularly in Goa, Mendes suggested some concrete responses of the Church to this phenomenon.

Dr. Lucas Thumma briefly presented the teaching of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) on socio-economic issues and highlighted its methodology.

The twenty-four participants discussed on the Papers presented and after a careful discernment decided to make an appeal to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India to bring to the knowledge of the people concerned the seriousness of the Debt problem and take steps toward the cancellation of Debt as part of the celebrations of Jubilee Year 2000, in keeping with the biblical understanding of the Jubilee. The Bishops will also be requested to evolve a pastoral policy of tourism and to offer an evaluation of the New Economic Policy to conscientize the Faithful.

A committee consisting of *Dr. Paul Leon*, *Dr. X. D. Selvaraj* and *Dr. John Chuthanatt, SJ*, was constituted to take steps to bring out publications of the Association of Moral Theologians of India.

It was decided to hold the next annual meeting of AMTI at Nagpur during October 26-28, 1997 on the theme "Culture and Ethics".

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