

# **Theology of D.S. Amalorpavadass Aimed at Making Human Community**

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## **II Part<sup>2</sup>**

### **The Process of Humanization**

First of all, Amalor recalled the importance of the Christian community in the process of humanization or in the process of building up the human community, because the Christian community had the unique experience of Christ. At the same time Amalor applied the humanisation process first and foremost in the life of the Church, more particularly in the life of the clergy and the religious, because he humbly acknowledged that the Church as an institution and as a constitutive element of the integrated social system was plainly and simply part of an unjust society, consciously or unconsciously. Hence he called the clergy and the religious to transfer their headquarters from the rich to the poor. The exigency

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<sup>2</sup> The first part of this article is already found in the previous of issue of *Vaiharai*. This part is simply a flow and a continuation of the first part.

was that they should be where the poor were, because God is where the poor are.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, in the process of humanization, Amalor emphasised the sharing aspect in mutuality. The poor share what they have and what they are with others and the Christian communities have to share mutually with the poor what they are and what they have. Once they are with the poor, they are living with the poor. Thirdly, mutual sharing of a life-style results in changing the life-style. Amalor firmly believed that when people genuinely lived with the poor it spontaneously changed their life-style and made them lead a life of simplicity. Amalor called this part of all-round inculturation.<sup>4</sup> The fourth and final criterion of humanization was based on the struggle for justice and liberation. To liberate the oppressed from the yoke of slavery, Amalor asked the clergy to engage with them, and involve themselves concretely in the struggle for justice and liberation. He himself stated that Christians were expected to love all people, but that it was difficult and at times impossible to be equal in an unjust society where nothing was equal. In such a situation Christians were to imitate the bias which God had for the poor and the oppressed.

The above four criteria of humanization clearly had to culminate in the struggle for justice. For, "justice is the fruit of a struggle, liberation too is the fruit of a long struggle, long march, only at the end of that you will get what is called humanisation," said Amalor.<sup>5</sup> He added that "if injustice is a fact, if domination is a reality, if people are dehumanised, protest is the only possibility."<sup>6</sup> Thus Amalor did not simply spiritualize the problems of the subaltern people nor did he make them a mere subject of an academic discussion. On the contrary, his whole plan of humanization was concretised in tangible action and protest

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<sup>3</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 330.

<sup>4</sup> DSA, *Poverty of the Religious*, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 317.

<sup>6</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 325.

“Why are people poor? domination, injustice, dehumanisation therefore long range solution is not to be with the poor and start a renaissance, struggle or struggle has already started, how shall I become part of that struggle so that society can be changed, they will be no more dominated, they will be liberated, they will be no more victims of injustice but justice will be done and therefore they can be little more human what shall I do, not being merely with the poor passively in meditation, actively we have to be with them to change the situation. That is long term solution.”<sup>7</sup>

As a praxis-oriented theologian, Amalor applied this humanization process in his life. His concern for the poor and the underprivileged led him to change his own life-style when in the early 1980s he became a guru in Anjali Ashram. Amalor was criticised as the proponent and agent of Brahmanical culture and his entire work was stigmatized and branded as Brahmanisation because of his Ashram life and because of the Indian liturgy. But truth it is that in June 1978 he organised an “All-India Consultation on Ashrams” in NBCLC involving all the *ashramites* of India, searching for Social Justice, and he stated that Christian ashrams should not promote Vedic and Brahmanical culture and should not contribute to the sanskritisation of everything. Moreover, he warned that ashrams should not be exclusively associated with inter-religious dialogue and inculturation to the extent that they could appear as different to and unconcerned about integral human development, social justice and all-round liberation. He, therefore, noted clearly that ashrams could not be a means of escaping the struggle of the poor and assuming a life-style and spirituality cut off from the common people.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava.*, p. 331.

<sup>8</sup> DSA, *Ashram Aikya: Whence and Whither* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1978), pp. 12, 13.

Subsequently Amalor organised a Research Project in 1981 for the first time with a scientific character and a specific discipline on the theme, "The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society" which became a break-through and turning-point in the history and life of the Catholic Church in India. In his introductory speech for the Research Project he underlined "the Commitment to Social Justice and creation of a just society" as one of the four thrusts of the National Centre (NBCLC).<sup>9</sup> In all his seminars and courses at the NBCLC, Amalor put forward the theme of "commitment to justice", the central dimension of all the formation programmes. All his exhortations were centred on rediscovering the human aspect of the religious life. Having sensed the pathos of millions of people suffering under the yoke of caste discrimination and poverty, Amalor understood how far they were reduced to being non-persons. Hence as a praxis-oriented theologian he did not put a stop to his sensibility and understanding with the academic discussion but went so far as to change own his life style to make it correspond to the life of the poor.<sup>10</sup>

### **To be Human is to be Free**

Amalor often said that "most of the problems in India are not at all religious, but they are basically human problems, because equality, impartiality, justice, this is not a religious problem, it is a human problem."<sup>11</sup> To all the humanitarian problems and crises in

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<sup>9</sup> The four thrusts of the NBCLC are: Commitment to Social Justice and creation of a just society; Inculturation of all aspects of Christian life and Church's activities; Inter-religious dialogue; and Living an authentic Indian Christian Spirituality. See DSA, ed., "Introduction Talk, Presentation of the Entire Research Project Dynamics of the Seminar", in *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, 18-24 Oct 1981 (Bangalore: NBCLC), 1981), p. 102.

<sup>10</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 329.

<sup>11</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 304.

India, Amalor's exceptional solution was humanization through the essential faculty of freedom or liberty. According to him, the most essential component in the process of humanisation was the realisation of inner and external freedom. Amalor gradually understood that from time immemorial huge masses of people had suffered due to caste discrimination. And he observed that the some dominant caste-groups continued to dehumanize and depersonalize millions of people and reduce them to a sub-human or non-human condition because they were in a state of dependence. They had lost their freedom due to three factors: dependency, exploitation and injustice.<sup>12</sup> In such a context, he found no meaning for humanity when those people and their existence were in peril and living in pathos without freedom; hence he developed his theology insisting on the need for freedom in every act of existence.

“Every act of existence is an act of freedom. ‘To be’ refers not only to human beings, it refers to anything that exists. That is why I said any act of existence is an act of freedom. In other words, one cannot exist unless one is free and the only way to exist is to be free. So they are two inseparable words both mean the same. To be free and to exist are one and the same. An existence without freedom is no existence. This is true not only for human beings but also for creation.”<sup>13</sup>

Having noticed all these life-negating factors, Amalor posed the question: “What does it mean to be human? His answer was that “To be human is to be free.” He emphasised the need for growing into humanness because apparently no one was fully human. This was a move towards becoming, because every act of

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<sup>12</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 317.

<sup>13</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, pp. 122-123.

being was an act of becoming, and therefore every act of being was a dynamic action which led one into growth, which led one into becoming that was a dynamic process articulated through an aspiration. Hence Amalor not only equated existence with freedom but also with the process of becoming, a process equal to becoming free. So he concluded by saying that no one could have any growth without freedom. Gradually Amalor related human freedom to human progress, social renewal, and social transformation. All social changes depended on "how far the people in a society are becoming more free, more participative, their dignity is respected, their rights are not trampled under the foot, not only some people but all the sections of people. So the progress, yardstick, acid test of becoming, is freedom. To be is to become free. Not to be free is stagnating, we also cease to exist."<sup>14</sup>

### **"To be Free is to be Human" from the Christological and Hindu Perspectives**

Amalor again and again recalled that his theologising was taking place in the context of injustice. So naturally his theology was a response to such a situation. He often remembered the vast "masses of people who were victims of oppression and injustice."<sup>15</sup> As a consequence of injustice, they were in perpetual bondage and their life an on-going dependence. This was against basic human freedom and human dignity. In this context Amalor presented Jesus as an authentic human person par excellence.<sup>16</sup> He defined the human person by looking at the life-style of Jesus. Thus (every) human person is one who truly, really, radically, totally,

<sup>14</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> DSA, *Vision, Thrust and Policy*, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, pp. 303-305.

unconditionally, irrevocably lives for 'the other'. For Jesus, and thus for Amalor, those who are the victims of injustice<sup>17</sup> and are deprived of human dignity and identity are 'the other'. Then Amalor taps the meaning of being a Christian from the previous definition. According to him, Jesus by his death and resurrection became Christ, i.e., the anointed, namely someone who irrevocably, totally, really, unconditionally, radically, authentically belonged to God and belonged to others. Accordingly, all those who really, truly, radically, totally, unconditionally, irrevocably live for others as Christ did are fully human and therefore they are really Christian.<sup>18</sup> Further, "when one is really and fully human so one is really Christian. The more human we are, the more Christian we become. To be a Christian means and includes to be fully human" says Amalor.<sup>19</sup>

The subsequent point was that Jesus was not only an authentic human person par excellence but also the embodiment of true freedom.<sup>20</sup> Freedom therefore remained a constitutive element of human existence. It consists in one's ability to respond to God, to respond to others and to respond to one's dynamism to become oneself. Amalor considered this ability as both a natural quality and a grace.<sup>21</sup> When freedom and human dignity are denied and manipulated, God is on the side of the people who are victims of injustice and He is present with his liberating action. Concretely God in Christ is the Liberator who has already initiated the liberation struggle. Amalor also believed that it was Jesus who restored human freedom from all the enslaving and dehumanizing forces because

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<sup>17</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 331.

<sup>18</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, pp. 307-308.

<sup>19</sup> DSA, *Vision of Religious Life*, p. 3; DSA, *Image of a Religious Brother: Vision of a Religious Brother in a De-Clericalized Church* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1980), pp. 30-31.

<sup>20</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 115.

<sup>21</sup> DSA, *Image of a Religious Brother*, p. 30.

He totally and unconditionally identified himself with the poor who are dehumanized.<sup>22</sup> In such a context, the Word of God that emerges cannot but be one of liberation for the victims of injustice,<sup>23</sup> because the Biblical concept that translates this action is closer to 'liberation' than to the traditionally used word 'salvation'. Moreover, from the Indian context of injustice and domination and oppression he interpreted and translated evangelisation in terms of liberation: "In the context of oppression, to 'evangelise' is to 'liberate'. It is obvious that if the gospel is meant for salvation through the full humanization of man in the total reality of this world, with the realisation of his wholeness and that of mankind and cosmos, then liberation is the practical translation of evangelisation."<sup>24</sup> To the de-humanised masses, Jesus is not only a true and authentic person, He not only revealed the meaning of human existence but also offered himself as the model and pattern for the process of total humanisation.

Thus Amalor gave centrality to Christ in the process of the struggle for liberation and freedom. He found meaning and empowerment in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The death of Jesus enabled people to live and die for others. The restoration of human dignity and freedom is the resurrection of those people and this change of order was the dawn of a new creation, the process by which a truly human community was built up. For Amalor, this was the new humanism, the pattern of a new humanity, revealed by Jesus Christ, in which people find a new meaning to human existence, a new orientation to history and a new means of fulfilling all men's aspirations, through which the process of reconciliation, liberation and relationship of man is realized.<sup>25</sup> Since

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<sup>22</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 332.

<sup>23</sup> DSA, *Vision, Thrust and Policy*, p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> DSA, "Evangelisation in the Context of India", p. 111.

<sup>25</sup> DSA, *Approach, Meaning and Horizon of Evangelization* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1973), p. 39.

all people see in Christ their human dignity elevated and marvellously restored to its wholeness, Christ's paschal mystery calls them to a greater communion with their fellow men who are still in the state of dehumanisation. Thus will be realized the goal toward which all humanity is tending – a human community – where on the basis of equality, justice and love, peace and joy will reign. Amalor considered it as the new heaven and new earth.<sup>26</sup> In short, the exigency of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is “to be human and to be free.”<sup>27</sup> Amalor defined evangelisation in the Indian context from the death and resurrection of Jesus. Following the footsteps of Christ, in India, “evangelisation means joining and leading the struggle for liberation! The Church has no other mission but to be the living sign of Jesus Christ, the liberator here and now. She should embody effectively his liberating action in the frustrating situation of our country, by her involvement in the common struggle of our people for liberation from sin, its allied forces and consequences: from the systemic evil, from the unjust structures of our society and from institutionalised violence.”<sup>28</sup>

This dictum, “to be human and to be free” calls upon the whole of humanity, especially the Church, to live and act freely as Christ did. First of all the Church is called to witness to her Christic-experience. Her witness demands that she, like Christ, in genuine solidarity, should identify herself with the suffering masses in concrete situations of injustice and risk everything for this cause. Secondly, her prophetic function must include a critique of society, denunciation of its many evils, questioning of wrong policies and change of unjust structures. It also implies a positive mobilization

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<sup>26</sup> DSA, *Approach, Meaning and Horizon*, p. 24-25.

<sup>27</sup> DSA, *Vision of Religious Life*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>28</sup> DSA, “Evangelisation in the Context of India”, pp. 110-111.

of efforts to effect social change, facilitate all-round development and humanization and thereby make an announcement of the Good News, the hope of a new society.<sup>29</sup> This is what all-round inculturation meant for Amalor.

Amalor integrated Hindu concepts such as dharma and moksha by interpreting them and giving them social implications with the vision of Christ for the Church's mission of humanisation. He treated the concept of freedom or humanization as the ultimate goal from the Hindu perspective of self-realisation (*siddhi*) which is expressed in terms of moksha, release, total freedom and all round liberation. For him, the discovery or realisation (*siddhi*) of being human and being free was essential if one was to be a Christian, a Hindu or a member of any other faith and also essential if one was to be Indian. For him self-realisation and God-realisation were not two different ends, but self-realisation was identical with God-realisation.<sup>30</sup> In the act of humanisation, one not only discovered one's self but also experienced God (God-consciousness and God-experience, God-realisation and divinisation). "In so doing man becomes human. To be fully human and to be fully realised is to be deeply aware and fully free."<sup>31</sup> In other words, when one reached the depths and touched the ground of self, one touched the ground of God, the ground of others and the ground of reality. Such realisation led human beings to communion with God (contemplation), fellowship with others (community life) and deep involvement in the affairs of the world (genuine commitment to society).<sup>32</sup> To conclude, Amalor's interpretation of human freedom from both Christological and Hindu perspectives broke all the

<sup>29</sup> DSA, "Evangelisation in the Context of India", pp. 110-111.

<sup>30</sup> DSA, *Poverty of the Religious*, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> DSA, *Poverty of the Religious*, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> DSA, *Poverty of the Religious*, pp. 10 and 21.

narrow sectarian ideas and ideologies and subsequently helped overcome all the narrow interpretations of Indian-ness, Indian identity and Indianisation.

### **To be Human is to be in Relation: Relation-Paradigm**

Amalor gradually developed his ideas aimed at creating a community which was both human and relational. He chose the relation-paradigm of human community to overcome all life-negating forces such as fundamentalism, communalism, racial domination, caste oppression, gender discrimination, depersonalisation and dehumanisation. From time immemorial, relationship in Indian society has been conditioned and determined by the caste factors which have created stratification, fragmentation and multiplicity in society. This is legitimized by the Hindu scriptures and justified by *Manu Dharma* with the notion of karma, dharma and moksha. It implies that the people of India ought to have or to exercise their social relationship on the basis of their respective castes. Division and discrimination in Indian society are said to be predestined and considered as the plan of God for the smooth functioning of society. Hence relationship is conditioned on the basis of caste and accordingly certain sections of people are considered as impure, and must not be touched or related with others. Moreover, from the year 1985 onwards, Amalor found that relationship in Indian society was under peril due to the organised violence carried out by Hindu fundamental organisations. People are also divided in the name of regions and languages, religions and ideologies. To challenge such divisive and exclusive forces and at the same time to encourage and promote unity in society, Amalor presented a new paradigm of relationship that was again based on the God of the Bible. In the creation account of the Bible, the creation narrative reaches its climax at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup>

day. There, the creation of humanity is singled out for special attention. God associates himself more closely with what he makes. God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female" (Gen. 1:26). First of all, according to Amalor, since God made man in his image, that meant that God was a Person!

"God created human persons to his image and likeness. He made them male and female, these two sentences to be taken as parallel not a repetition, not parallelism but as affirmation. First of all this word 'image and likeness' means God is a person. Person has got many meanings. Person means relationships. Life means relationships, so God is relationship when he makes us to his image he also wants us to be persons and relationship. Therefore one cannot think of freedom without being persons, being relations."<sup>33</sup>

Amalor based the theology of relationship on the God of the Bible who is not simply mono god, uncial god, but He is a Trinitarian God. The name of three Persons, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" reveals a relationship of love and communion in absolute freedom. All the three persons are nothing but relationships.<sup>34</sup> The practical implication is that just as there are no divisions or domination in the Trinity, there should be no divisions or domination among people in society since they share His image and likeness. So the image of God applies both individually and collectively. From the very beginning, living in communion is God's purpose for mankind. This image and likeness calls each person to be in communion with his neighbour with love and respect. Hence the second meaning of the image of God is the human community. It is a call to review the

<sup>33</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, pp. 124-125.

<sup>34</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, pp. 124-125.

human relationship, to consider whether it is born, nourished and established in an environment of freedom and liberty. All can be free in the measure in which they are related. Therefore the more one is related, the more deeply related, the more universally related, the more of a person he will be, the more free he will be. Hence Amalor considered freedom as the capacity to relate with everybody. The quality of relationship depends on the quality of one's freedom.<sup>35</sup>

“The moment you have persons and relationships, automatically you get community. God is a community and a communion of persons. To be human means to be in communion and community, therefore there is no other way of living human life, no other way of being free.”<sup>36</sup>

According to Amalor, the third meaning of the image of God is complementarity and mutuality<sup>37</sup>; that means that no person, no culture and no religion is self-sufficient and absolute. Though he based his theology of relationship on the very metaphors of male/female complementarity ordained in Genesis, he developed it with the notions of dependency and independency. For him, the attitude of independency leads one to a superiority complex and domination which depersonalizes and dehumanizes others. The attitude of domination continues to create bondage and slavery in human society in political, economical, social and cultural realms. Amalor calls this on-going bondage 'neo-colonialism'. Human society which is the image of God is disfigured by domination and oppression. On the contrary, the attitude of dependence acknowledges limitedness and inadequacy in oneself. And at the same time such

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<sup>35</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, pp. 124-125.

<sup>36</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 125.

<sup>37</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 125.

an attitude seeks complementarity and mutuality for a genuine experience of fullness (*purnam or pleror a*) and harmony.<sup>38</sup>

If God created human beings in his image as male and female, that also implies equality of personhood, equality of dignity, mutual respect, harmony, complementarity and a unified destiny. Just as they are male and female, all human beings are to exhibit full and equal humanness as the image of God and they ought to enjoy equal value as being fully human, with equal dignity, worth and importance. Neither a superiority nor an inferiority complex has its place either in a man or in society, for both reflect the image of God who cannot be divided, cannot be broken.<sup>39</sup> Real harmony is realized not only in the family but also in the society as the result of peaceful interaction between people who are different, like men and women are. That is why complementarity is best expressed by the French as "*Vive la différence!*"; living with difference and living in harmony is the ultimate goal which Amalor calls the "Kingdom of God".<sup>40</sup>

### **Towards Making Human Community through Adelphea, Koinonia and Kenosis**

Both the human and the relation-paradigms of Amalor, as discussed above, reflect the image of God who is in communion and in relation. From this Amalor formulated two components of a human community, namely community-character and movement-character. These two characters, according to him, mark the true Indian and the true Christian. Community-character recalls the very fact of 'living togetherness' which is the essence of India and

<sup>38</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 125.

<sup>39</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 154.

<sup>40</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 198.

can be called 'communion' (*koinonia*) in Christian understanding. Living in communion is true nationalism that must ensure that people of different faiths and cultures live together spontaneously. In order to promote communion and integration in an inter-religious and multicultural society, it seems that Amalor flavoured his humanistic paradigm with the *koinonia* model (community-character) of inculturation which is oriented towards forming human communities in India.<sup>41</sup> The community-character of human society overcomes any sort of domination, but promotes relationship and dialogue. It has a movement-character within itself. The attitude of emptying (*kenosis*) or losing is translated as movement-character in the Christian understanding.<sup>42</sup> This "movement is no more an isolated sporadic and partial effort, but a dynamic, national and deep-rooted movement."<sup>43</sup> The incarnated Word and death of Jesus are the supreme expression of the *kenosis* model or movement-character par excellence. The biblical covenantal relationship was accomplished fully in and through Jesus the Word incarnated.

"All that will become possible only in an authentic Christian spirituality of self-emptying (*kenosis* or *sunya*) in a pilgrimage (*yatra* or *pascha*), with openness and expectation, with certainty of hope we grope towards the ultimate goal which is fullness (*Poornam* or *Pleroma*). This whole movement should be lived under the action and guidance of the Spirit of Christ."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> DSA, *Post-Vatican Liturgical Renewal in India (1963-1968)* (Bangalore: NCLC, 1968), pp. 70-71.

<sup>42</sup> The movement-character of the Incarnated Word is best expressed by St. Paul: "...though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2: 6-8).

<sup>43</sup> DSA, ed., *Report of the Third All-India Catechetical Meeting: 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1973* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1976), p. 68.

<sup>44</sup> DSA, *Moving with the Spirit: Statement of the V All-India Catechetical Meeting (11-17 Dec 1978)* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1979), pp. 221-222.

Since Amalor found the dimension of kenosis to be the inner content of the incarnation (the incarnation of the Word who was marked as mediator between God and the World in relationship and reconciliation), he placed self-emptying or readiness to lose one's own particularities as the condition and imperative to construct human community. The implication is that inculturation as the continuation of incarnation enables the Church in India to die to herself in order to give life abundantly to all the people, especially to the people who live in a subhuman state. Amalor's kenosis model of inculturation attempted to interpret and present a new way of being Indian which included both secular and societal/subaltern trends but was radically opposed to the Hindu nationalism. The new way of being Indian lay in the merging of diverse individual identities and that merging created a national identity which could be Indian. The merging of identities manifested both the community-character (*koinonia*) and the movement-character (*kenosis*). He explained this with the following illustration. He compared Indian civilization to an expansive river and the various cultural traditions within its confines to streams or tributaries which joined the river at different points and thereby gave it a distinctive character. Each river had an identity with a specific name and honour, but they all had a common identity when they merged together in the ocean.

“All of us therefore are destined to merge, our true identity is not Kaveri, Yamuna, Ganga, Godavari, Krishna, Tungabhadra. That is false identity. After these rivers merge into the bay of Bengal or the Arabian Sea, where is Tungabhadra, where is Narmada, where is Kaveri, where is Ganga...? All of them have lost their identity. That very identity is to be the identity of God... There is only one identity. We come from God and go back to God.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Amalor cites the Vatican II Declaration on non-Christian religions: All human

The merging of different rivers probably leads the reader to a gross misunderstanding of syncretism. But Amalor's understating of merging or integrating with others by losing oneself evolved from his deep faith in the spirituality of the *kenosis* of Jesus: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat" (John 12:24). This merging also recalls the fact that all human beings have one origin and all human beings have one destiny that is God.<sup>46</sup> For Amalor, the God of the Bible is a force in whom everything is included, and apart from or outside Him nothing can exist. Hence God is the supreme expression of inclusiveness.<sup>47</sup> He created every human being to live in unity and in relationship by losing himself or herself for the other. That is to say that "though we are different, we shall experience the flow of loving and respectful relationship among us all who have one goal, God and God alone and one origin, one common vision and one set of values."<sup>48</sup>

At the point of merging, "we have an experience of unity, communion and harmony."<sup>49</sup> True humanness or human identity is manifested only when one loses one's superimposed identities. While emphasizing the importance of human identity, he in no way underestimated other identities. All identities were meaningful and worthy of esteem as long as they were charged by humanness and humanization. However, fear of losing of one's identity was the major problem in the process of integration which for Amalor was often meant by inculturation.<sup>50</sup> But the fact was that movement-

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beings have one origin and all human beings have one destiny that is God. Only on the way we are quarrelling, making distinctions, claiming mine and yours. See DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, pp. 270-271.

<sup>46</sup> Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 1.

<sup>47</sup> DSA, *Integration and Interiorisation* (Mysore: Anjali Ashram, 1990).

<sup>48</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 175.

<sup>49</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>50</sup> DSA, *Joyful Response*, p. 74.

character (*kenosis*) could be best expressed in and through *adelphea* (brotherhood) and *koinonia* (fellowship).<sup>51</sup> *Adelphea* and *koinonia* are realized only by sharing or mutual witnessing. Amalor called this act of mutual sharing "indigenisation" that should promote bonds of wider and deeper communion with other churches, with the people of other faiths, more particularly with the poor and the oppressed.<sup>52</sup> In brief, *adelphea*, *koinonia* and *kenosis* are concretely lived out by the traits of relationship, solidarity and concern for others.<sup>53</sup>

## Conclusion

To sum up, Amalor's vision of Indian society was based on inclusive, pluralistic and humanistic and relational models which were nurtured mainly by the subaltern peoples' thirst for human dignity. While the Hindu nationalists' perception of Indian society was limited to opening it up to the Hindu masses by excluding and eliminating the differences, Amalor viewed Indian society as inclusive and all-embracing. The idea of the openness and inclusiveness of society, community and the local church proposed by Amalor remains an antidote to the limiting and excluding ideology of Hindutva. Further, for Hindu nationalists Indian nationhood was already predestined and achieved in the Vedic age whereas for Amalor it was not yet achieved and had to be accomplished by concerted efforts with the virtues of humanism, secularism and pluralism.

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<sup>51</sup> DSA, *Approach, Meaning and Horizon*, p. 76.

<sup>52</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 159.

<sup>53</sup> DSA, ed., *Report of the III All-India Biblical Meeting -1977* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1977), pp. 46-47.

At the same time, Amalor felt the difficulties in forming human communities, because the creation of a new society involves the changing of social reality which is a structural reality, institutional reality and system reality. It is a difficult mission because injustice is inseparably part of the institution and such a system cannot be removed unless the very system, very institution, very structure are changed.<sup>54</sup> Amidst the difficulties in creating a new society, Amalor could see rays of hope because 'people' believe that things can be changed and should be changed in order to build up a new world, to bring about a new social order, to realise a new self-image of man with his dignity, rights and aspirations, goals and potentialities.<sup>55</sup> This process has already been started by many secular forces and people of good will. It was Jesus who started this march which is moving towards its goal. "The final state of the world which Jesus has started re-creating, that which we call Kingdom of God, is a just society."<sup>56</sup> With this in mind, Amalor called "all people, especially Christians to be involved in the building up of the human community"<sup>57</sup> that is the tangible and visible sign of the Kingdom of God. To conclude, the theology of Amalor could be briefly summarised as follows: the gospel of Jesus becomes intelligible and reachable to Indians most readily through the concrete actions of transformative dialogue, liberation, humanisation and integration (wholeness and communion) and thus of the building up of a human community of equals and of justice.

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<sup>54</sup> DSA, *Atma Purna Anubhava*, p. 317.

<sup>55</sup> DSA, *Theology of Evangelization in the Indian Context*, p. 16.

<sup>56</sup> DSA, *Vision, Thrust and Policy*, p. 18.

<sup>57</sup> DSA, *Approach, Meaning and Horizon*, p. 71.