

# VAIHARAI

(The Dawn)

A Theological Half-Yearly

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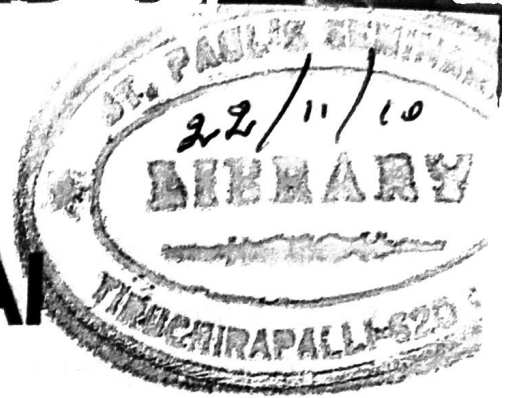
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## Editorial

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2010 in New Delhi, at the joint session of the Indian parliament the American president Brack Hussein Obama delivered the keynote address. In his speech he had mentioned a striking statement. That is "the health of the people is the wealth of a nation." Here the peripheral comprehension of the word "health" may not provide us sufficient scope towards the realization of a better human community. But at the same time our sincere approach to this word with a sense of integral growth of humanity will lead us to its in-depth meaning that is pregnant with diverse expressions. They are namely, good governance, unpolluted environment, uncorrupted politics, and people centered economic policies. It is a known fact that today with an insensitive approach towards the little narratives of the fragile realities of this world we cannot trace out a meaningful space where the actualization of a humane society comes to the fore.

At present the global superpower's seductive agendas that control the fields of politics, economic, culture, market and communication have covered up the fragile frames of the neglected other (poor) with a huge blanket of rhetoric lie called "one-open-integral-world." This premeditative-coined cosmetic watchword of the global masters has hidden the small narratives of the unknown and reduced them to the state of the abandoned outposts of humanity. In the current context this watchword has become the "grand narrative," which generates a new culture based on a hedonistic outlook, a fresh



social structure having homogenic approach as its base, an economy without ethics and suffocates the space of the poor where they bleed for life, a dark art of Ariel piracy through its communication network, and an ecological crisis where new life ceases to flourish in this universe. This narrative leads to economic absolutism. Such unethically motivated absolutism that stemming from the Globalization “uses the illusion of unity to force all of reality to serve its economic end. Those who cannot be fitted into the system-the powerless and the poor-are marginalized. This is more troubling because the powers that control the process are faceless and elusive”<sup>1</sup>

Such elusive and untraceable forces that operate in the realm of the global powers, conveniently edge out the voiceless to the sphere of wilderness. In such social engineering the poor do not have enough strength to mount an attack on the global goliaths of the present day. In fact this deficit of power that makes the poor so vulnerable in the realm of governance constantly instills in them the sense of despair and hopelessness. Hence the margin’s insecurity exposes the disregard for the sense of human dignity and common good, which indicates nothing but the negation of life. The society that rejects the value of life, humiliates the meaning of truth, love and justice; and such humiliation disapproves the presence of God here and now. Since life stems from God, He/She becomes the source of truth and love. From our Christian faith and scriptures we learn that God emphatically speaks through the humiliated least and the unknown identities of humanity, which is very much evident in the words of Jesus that are mentioned in the Gospel of Mathew. “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of these least who are members of my family, you did it to me. . . . Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” (Mt 25: 40; 45). Therefore from here we get the lead to

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<sup>1</sup> Damayanthi M. A. Niles. “A Common Hope is Always Context - Specific.” in *Hope for the World: Mission in a Global Context*, ed. Walter Brueggemann (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 112.

understand that, God's concern for the development of humanity based on the emergence of truth and love is connected with the agenda of the least. In other words, "agenda from the periphery is the agenda of God."<sup>2</sup> Rejection of the least simultaneously implies the negation of God, which eventually terminates the prominence of charity, truth, love and justice from the human space. Hence, both the local and global authentic integral development of this present humanity could be validated only through the resurrection of the little narratives of the poor who lingers for a better future, because it is the authentic progress of the rejected identities that approve the true development of a society or a nation.

The encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI on *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth) discloses this concern. For him the community that considers Jesus' life as the driving force for its progress could become the source of true development. This source brings in authentic progress because it believes in God, who is the expression of truth and love. It is also very much obvious that the sphere in which truth and love break the inertia of monolithic- hegemonic powers, the "sense of concern for the other" becomes the live-link among humans, which is nothing but charity. Through this encyclical Pope expresses his concerns about the current global unethically motivated governing systems that perpetuate poverty, disparity, and insecurity; and such systems systematically erase the sense of common good in the human community. In fact such amnesia of the sense of common good endangers the life of the margins and the entire eco-system. In order to cease the parades of the devouring natured governing systems the pope suggests good governance that anchors its faith in Charity in truth. And for this to happen our scientific technologies, wealth, and knowledge have to roll together with a single agenda, which is nothing but the agenda of the unknown "Other." It is precisely this agenda

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<sup>2</sup> Felix Wilfred, "The Agenda of the Victims: The Poor Explore the Hopes for a New Century," *Jeevadhara* 30 (2000): 9.

that mirrors God's creative love and encompasses the well being of the diverse expressions of this universe.

In this current issue we have six articles, which bring in fresh approaches in the field of theology by some scholars namely, Drs, Sahayadhas Fernando, Stephen Fernando, Charles, Prakash Louis, Alphonse and Soosai Rethinam Raja. The first four articles will deal with various notions that are inspired by an encyclical called "Caritas in Veritate," and the other two will illuminate us with the new thinking in the fields of Christology and Mariology. According to Dr. Sahayadhas any social engineering, which is involved in the true development and the integral growth of humanity has to accommodate the essentiality of truth (God) in its approach. Because it is this approach that feeds the need of the poor in the society. The priority to the concerns of the margins that stems from such disposition reveals the interconnectedness between faith and life. He further affirms that, the church has to inculcate such commitment into the hearts and minds of the young generation in order to serve God and His/Her people, which eventually brings in fullness of life to the poor and dignity to the diverse realities that exist in this world.

Those who control the entire management of the market-economy have the obligation to use their power for the realization of common good. Dr. Stephen explains this aspect in his article. For him, an ethically bound economic system is people centered and the structure that promotes the eclipse of the sense of ethics discloses its passion for profit and neo-colonial consciousness rather than the values of Gospel. Hence openness to God's voice is essential for the actualization of justice and common good in the society. Dr. Charles believes that in order to transform the social realities the pastoral concern of the church must reflect the vitality of truth through its work. According to his perception the church's adaptation of justice and love in and through its pastoral praxis authenticate itself as the medium of truth in this world.

The perception of Dr. Prakash Louis on *Development and the Catholic Church* reflects the salient points that exist in the encyclicals such as, *Populorum Progressio* and *Caritas in Veritate*. According to him, the humans are in search of a fitting solution to the problems that impede the development of humanity. He affirms that today the society is gripped with poverty, hunger, and inequality. These dehumanizing elements (culture of death) promote the sense of exclusion at all levels. He further adds that, the church has a social commitment to save the downtrodden and all the affected identities. For him this redeeming act could be possible by promoting interdependent communities that hold the spirit of solidarity as their source of empowerment.

The article on *Incarnation and Avatar* ushers a fresh approach in the realm of Christology. Dr. Alphonse firmly believes that reading the meaning of the mystery of incarnation of Jesus Christ through the lenses of the Indian-indigenous category- *Avatar* is not an exercise to minimize the uniqueness of the incarnation of Jesus but rather it will lead the divine mystery more closer to the hearts and minds of the Indian believing community and humanity at large. In other words the focus of this approach is to make Christ more relevant to the present Indian context in which people still believe in the meaning of co-existence and dialogue. The work of Dr. Raja on Mariology confers a detailed historical perspective on Marian devotion earlier to the council of Ephesus. Through this reading the author brings out different identities of Mary such as Mary as a true disciple, and as a prophetess that exist in the history. He also believes that the resurrection of these identities of Mary in the present context could serve as a vital source to emancipate women from subjugation and lead them to the sphere of dignity and equality.

**Editor**

**Dr. Johnson S. P.**