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A Christian Vision of a New Society

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Abstract: Every religion has its starting point in the experience of evil and suffering and offers a way of overcoming evil and escaping suffering. This may be through one's own efforts of self-discipline or through the mediation of a saviour figure. The goal of liberation is a new life in a new society. The vision of this new society provides inspiration and motivation for people's quest for liberation. Every religion offers a variety of means and *margas* (ways) for this quest. The Christian vision of a new society is found in the life - the deeds and words - of Jesus Christ. Jesus termed his vision for a new society the *Kingdom of God*. For the Jewish people who listened to Jesus this image evoked a lot of resonances. It awoke their memories of the great deeds God had done for them.

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Every religion has its starting point in the experience of evil and suffering and offers a way of overcoming evil and escaping suffering. This may be through one's own efforts of self-discipline or through the mediation of a saviour figure. The goal of liberation is a new life in a new society. The vision of this new society provides inspiration and motivation for people's quest for liberation. Every religion offers a variety of means and *margas* (ways) for this quest.

The Christian vision of a new society is found in the life – the deeds and words – of Jesus Christ. Jesus termed his vision for a new society the *Kingdom of God*. For the Jewish people who listened to Jesus this image evoked a lot of resonances. It awoke their memories of the great deeds God had done for them.

When they were slaves in Egypt God had liberated them. God gave them a land flowing with milk and honey. God made a covenant with them making them his own people. Even when they were unfaithful to God, going after false gods (idols) like selfishness, power and pleasure, God sent many Prophets to call them to conversion and, through many trials, brought them back to God's rule. Knowing well their sinful tendencies and their social consequences like inequality, injustice and oppression of the poor by the rich, God

institutionalized a structure like the *Jubilee* when people could restitute all that they have taken from others unjustly over the years and start again as a community of brothers and sisters.

The disloyalty of the people upset the social order to such an extent that God had to dispossess them of their land, which was the root of their identity and well-being, and send them into exile. The Prophets, however, kept reminding the people of God's promises and evoked the vision of a new society to which God would lead them at the appropriate time, provided they remain faithful to the covenant. God would give them a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek 36:16-37), a new life (Ezek 37:1-14) in a new land of fertility and abundance (Ezek 34:23-31). God would send a messenger "to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners" (Is 61:1). God would create a new heaven and a new earth, where the people would live full of joy and peace. Their harmony would be symbolized by the wolf and the lamb feeding together (Is 65:17-25). God's rule would reach out to the ends of the earth and to all peoples (Is 60:1-7; Ps 117).

When Jesus began his proclamation: "The Kingdom of God has come

near; repent and believe in the good news" (Mk 1:15), the people must have recalled the promise of the Prophets. The good news of Jesus, however, is different from that of the Prophets. He does not only announce a future Kingdom to come; through his life and his miracles he shows that the Kingdom of God has already arrived, though its fulfilment will depend on the people's response. He claims to be God's special messenger who brings good news to the poor, freedom to the captives, and liberation to the oppressed (Lk 4:18). He frees people from their maladies and mental afflictions seen and experienced as symbols of their slavery to sin and to the Evil one. He condemns the political and religious leadership that keep the people enslaved. He challenges them by disobeying their merely legal prescriptions with regard to the Sabbath or to ritual purity. In the social conflict between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, he chooses to be on the side of the oppressed. He keeps the company of and eats with the publicans, the sinners, the prostitutes and the marginalised of his day. He mediates to them God's loving kindness and asks them to love one another. He teaches a morality of intention, rather than of observance.¹

The character of the Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed has been beautifully summarized by George Soares-Prabhu.

When the revelation of God's love (the Kingdom) meets its appropriate response in man's trusting acceptance of this love (repentance), there begins a mighty movement of personal and societal liberation which sweeps through human history. The

movement brings *freedom* inasmuch as it liberates each individual from the inadequacies and obsessions that shackle him. It fosters *fellowship*, because it empowers free individuals to exercise their concern for each other in a genuine community. And it leads on to *justice*, because it impels every true community to adopt the just societal structures which alone make freedom and fellowship possible.²

As Soares-Prabhu points out, though Jesus inaugurates the Kingdom through his words and deeds, it will become a reality in history only when people respond to it by true conversion, which involves both a change of heart and a change of the unjust structures that our sinfulness has created in the world and in society. The good news of Jesus therefore remains a continuing challenge to succeeding generations.

While Jesus presents a broad vision of the Kingdom and indicated through his actions some concrete points of application relevant to his own-time, he has not given us a blueprint that is valid for all time. He spells out the values we need to safeguard. But he does not tell us how to do it in each generation. He leaves us the task of translating his theological vision in a sociological categories. As Soares-Prabhu says again:

The vision of Jesus summons us, then, to a ceaseless struggle against the demonic structures of unfreedom (psychological and sociological) erected by mammon; and to a ceaseless creativity that will produce in every age new blueprints for a society ever more consonant with the Gospel vision of man. Lying on the horizons of human history and yet part

of it, offered to us as a gift yet confronting us as a challenge, Jesus' vision of a new society stands before us as an unfinished task, summoning us to a permanent revolution.³

Spelling out a contemporary Christian vision of a new society, therefore, involves a double task. Looking at the society today, we have to identify, first of all, the structures of unfreedom that enslave people in various ways. Then we have to suggest creatively new blueprints consonant with Jesus' vision, that we will have to strive to realise in today's world. Each generation has to repeat this unfinished task of "reinventing revolution" at every age.⁴ I shall engage in this twofold task in the following pages. Given the limitations of space it can only be schematic.

It is also good to be aware from the beginning that the values highlighted by Jesus' vision of a new society, namely *freedom, fellowship and justice*, are not particularly Christian, but basically human values which others also may be pursuing. Therefore, I would like to stress that what I am trying to present is a Christian vision of a *human, not merely a Christian* society. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it is Jesus' vision rather than a Christian vision. We should not be surprised to find that many others are also as interested in "reinventing revolution" as we are. We are invited then to collaboration, not to competition. I shall come back to this point when I speak about the role of the Christian community as *Church* in seeking to realise Jesus' vision of a new society.

For the sake of clarity we shall look at Indian (and global) society through a grid of six elements, namely Economics - Politics - Society - Person - Culture - Religion.⁵ In each case we shall look briefly at what is wrong with it at the moment, what has Jesus' vision to propose and what kind of concrete alternatives we can suggest.

An Economic Order with a Social Conscience

The economic world order is today dominated by liberal capitalism. Profit is its driving force. Profit comes out of the market. Traders claim absolute freedom to play in the market. Behind the traders are the producers. Their production often focuses not on goods to meet the basic needs of the people, but on goods to respond to the consumer needs. These needs are created and promoted by the media through advertisements. The end of the process is that wealth accumulates in a few hands. In the stock market such wealth produces more wealth by mere speculation without involving any production. The freedom of the market is supposed to favour competition among traders and bring down prices for the consumer. But traders either acquire monopolies or create artificial scarcities or form cartels to keep prices up and increase their profits, sometimes at unreasonable levels. The gap between the rich and the poor keeps increasing.

What is true of individual nations, is also true of the international market. The richer nations grow richer at the expense of the poor nations. Manufactured goods are privileged over raw

materials and agricultural goods. And the trader is privileged in comparison with the producer. Since the focus of economic actors is on production, trade and profit, they tend to exploit people and nature for their own selfish ends. The so-called 'free market' is not really free, as it is controlled by the rich companies and nations to protect their own interests. In any *free* encounter between the *powerful* and the *weak*, the weak are bound to suffer. Commerce and the stock market have replaced production as the motors of the economy. The net result of all this is widespread poverty and blatant economic inequality between the rich and the poor within nations and among nations. Even when essential necessities like food are available, people often lack money to buy them because of widespread unemployment or poorly paid employment.

Looking at this situation, the Christians will think of many values that come to them from the Bible. The earth is God's gift to all peoples and is meant to be shared among all in an equitable manner. All people are brothers and sisters and we are called to be a community that shares all that we have, especially with those who are most in need. Human beings are created in the image of God and have certain basic rights that have to be respected. Among these are rights to a dignified life and work and appropriate recompense. They should not be treated as commodities in the market whose only value is their labour power.

Finally, we must always show special concern for the poor and the suffering. God was aware that production

and trade are part of human communities, and that these will eventually lead to inequalities because of the different talents, capacities, initiatives and energies of people. Foreseeing this God institutes the *jubilee* every fiftieth year (Lev 25), when slaves will be released, land restored, debts forgiven, etc. The people reestablish a community of equality and make a new beginning. It is true that the Bible restricts it to the Israelites, but the principle can be extrapolated to all. When the Lord says: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants" (Lev 25:23), it applies not only to the Israelites but to all.

The basic economic principle then is that the goods of the earth belong to the Lord. We are but stewards who are allowed to use them according to the Lord's intentions and purposes in such a way that all can benefit. Any attempt at hoarding and profiteering without concern for every one (liberal capitalism) is wrong.

How do we translate these values and principles into action in the contemporary world?⁶ Freedom does not mean irresponsibility. Economic creativity must be encouraged and production increased so that the needs of all can be adequately met. A certain incentive to people to encourage creativity and production in terms of profits need not be excluded. But the prime concern of economic activity must be to meet the needs of all people, not merely the luxury, not to say the greed, of a few. Enough production of basic necessities of life like food, medicine and their easy

availability must be assured. There must be an efficient global distribution system using all the conveniences of the modern means of transport. Labour intensive industries must be promoted so that all can find adequate employment. This means that the inordinate accumulation of wealth and the free pursuit of profit must be curtailed. The stock markets must be taxed. The process of production and distribution must be socially controlled at all levels, from the village through the nation to international levels. A safety net must be provided to care for the poor and the underprivileged. In short, our economic theory and policy must be guided by social welfare. It is significant that Amartya Sen, a specialist in welfare economics, has been given the Nobel prize for economics this year (1998).⁷ This means that we have the theory available. What we need is the political will to formulate appropriate policies and to establish the necessary controls in order to translate theory into practice.

A Participative Democracy

Politicians and capitalists support each other. In various ways the capitalists bribe the people in political power to protect themselves and to create conditions favourable to their market games. The politicians of the richer countries work hand in hand with the capitalists to create markets for them everywhere. In the poor countries the capitalists and their political friends support dictatorial governments that will provide a "peaceful" atmosphere for their exploitation. Even in the so-called democracies, elections are won on the strength of money and/or media

power. The people's representatives are only keen on enriching themselves rather than on serving the interests of the people. Emotions centred around caste, religion or ethnicity and even poverty are whipped up to create vote banks. The minorities are everywhere dominated not only politically, but also economically and socially. Hero worship or media-created images bring incompetent individuals to power. Feudalism, in which the landlords are now replaced by industrialists and political bosses, masquerades as democracy. International institutions like the UNO, IMF, WB, WTO are controlled by and made to serve the interests of the richer countries. The poor are suppressed by authoritarian governments using legal and para-legal coercive forces. In a moment of crisis, the remaining global superpower and its allies would not hesitate to threaten or to engage in military action to defend their economic interests. The production and sale of arms is a flourishing industry.

In such a power-hungry world, Jesus offers an alternative way of holding and exercising authority. The very idea of the Kingdom of God is the assertion that God alone is the ruler and every human authority is derived from and is accountable to God. Every person is free and responsible for himself/herself and answerable only to God. Jesus often criticises the religious and political authorities of his day for not being responsive to the needs of the people. He himself gives an example of authority as service: in becoming human he empties himself and becomes a servant. He washes the feet of his disciples as a concrete illustration of a new

relationship between power and service. He exhorts his disciples to become like little children and not to seek places of honour. In his miracles he constantly shows that political and religious power structures are to be used for the benefit of the people: "The Sabbath is for people, not people for the Sabbath!" (Mk 2:27) Power must legitimise itself by its care for the poor and the oppressed. Jesus does not organize a political revolt. But his company with the poor and the marginalized of his day and his vision of an alternate way of exercising power were sufficient threats to both the Jewish and the Roman authorities, so that they joined together to physically eliminate him.

What would an ideal society be like according to the vision of Jesus? One can say that it would be a participative democracy.⁸ This is different from what we have today, representative democracies which hand power over to a small group of people, who are elected and who can abuse it in any way they want. Elections change incumbents without bringing about any real transformation. Besides, the present system institutionalises the dominance of a majority over the minorities. In a participative democracy, there will be democratic structures from the grass-roots level upwards to national and international levels. There will be a constant interchange between the people and their delegates so that people can participate in making both policies and decisions that concern them. There would be widespread information and discussion before decisions are taken. Of course people will have to be conscientized and prepared for this, so

that group loyalties based on caste or class do not vitiate genuine participation. The chosen leaders, who are in authority only for a limited time, are in constant touch with the people and look upon themselves as their servants. Widespread consultation would mean that persuasion rather than coercion would be the way for effecting changes through consensus.

Is this vision too idealistic? In many primal groups similar participative structures exist at the level of the village and of the tribe. Switzerland has a system of more or less autonomous Cantons that manage their own affairs, delegating to the national government responsibility for limited specific areas. This would certainly imply decentralization at all levels and the respect for the autonomy of the local in the face of the global. Even within existing democratic structures it is possible to reform the electoral process to make it more responsive to the wishes of the people. One could also reform the parliamentary system at all levels, national and international, in such a way that informed consensus rather than manipulation or the imposition by the majority becomes the guiding principle in decision making. An active and conscientized judiciary can check abuses. We will have to rethink the party system of politics. As a matter of fact, in most countries, where the cohesion of parties is not determined by other factors like ethnicity and religion, the radical ideological differences between the left and the right are turning into mere differences of emphasis. The *Panchayati Raj* would have been an interesting experiment, if it had been

properly carried out. After people have lived through authoritarian governments of various kinds, they have to be conscientized and educated for participative democracy. We also have to develop appropriate structures. People across the world have shown themselves responsible voters in elections. If given a chance, I am sure that they will rise to their responsibilities as citizens of a true democracy, that will really be *for* the people and *by* the people and not surrender their rights to a group of self-serving leaders.

A Society of Equals

One of the obstacles for a successful participative democracy is the division of society into a multiplicity of groups based on factors like caste, ethnicity, religion, etc. The caste system is the bane of Indian society. But elsewhere race, ethnicity and religion similarly divide societies. With the largescale migrations either for economic or political reasons, no society today is immune to social divisions and discriminations. One could keep off the 'offending' terms and speak blandly of multiculturalism. But the social reality is the same. Communalism is a phenomenon which takes for granted that people, who belong to a particular religion, caste or ethnic group, also share common economic and political interests. Such presumptions are not entirely baseless when majority groups oppress minorities. Even without such complication and radicalization, social divisions can be disruptive of community. We cannot deny ethnic or religious differences. Even the castes, shorn of their hierarchical structure, may continue as

kin or cultural groups. But what causes the problem is that these factors become causes for discrimination and antagonism. Feminists point out how sex too has been and is a cause for social discrimination. In the process of formation of group identities, *WE* are opposed to *THEY*. Such antagonisms often have historical roots. Previous conflicts continue to divide the people as unhealed memories, causing prejudices and evoking anger.

Against such social divisions and discriminations, Jesus' vision of a new society finds a clear affirmation of universal equality in the words of St. Paul: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). While the distinction between the slave and the free has to be abolished, the differences between the Jew and the Greek, male and female will not disappear. But they are not causes for discrimination. Every human is a child of God and deserves respect, not only because of what he/she shares with others as common humanity, but also because of what makes him/her different from others, whether it is a gift of God or his/her own accomplishment. In the New Testament we see a movement from the exclusivism of the Jews to a universal perspective. Peter's vision at Joppa (Acts 10) and Paul's vocation to the Gentiles are turning points. In Jesus' own life we find him dealing with Samaritans and Gentiles. He even holds up a Samaritan as the model for his new commandment to love the other. People in the tradition of St. Paul see the Kingdom as not merely for all people

but as meant to bring all people together as one universal community (1 Cor 15; Eph 1:3-14).

How can we translate this vision of unity in difference without discrimination in our contemporary societies? A certain rational outlook tends to look upon people as mere individuals with rights and does not respect the rights of cultural and ethnic groups. Contemporary discussions on multiculturalism point to the need for autonomy for these groups within the social order.⁹ Many Constitutions, like the Indian one, also offer special protections for religious, linguistic and cultural minorities. But what is important is to promote the sense of community that goes beyond group identity at regional, national and international levels. Nations today are coming together for economic reasons. At this level, of course, the factors of group identity are ignored. What seems necessary is to promote a dialogue of life, where the difference of the other is recognised and respected and at the same time a relationship is affirmed in terms of a higher principle of community. People do relate to each other in the public transport, in the school or in the market place. They could be helped to get to know each other in their specific identities and to respect differences so as to remove prejudice and antagonism. Schools could be the places where such mutual discovery could be promoted, particularly in the context of collaboration in some common activity. Special efforts at conflict resolution addressing causes and conditions can also be made during actual conflicts, which provide an opportunity to make every one aware of the real grievances

that particular groups may have, because these may often be ignored or dismissed at other times.¹⁰

Free Persons

Contemporary society and culture are highly individualistic. But the individual is only valued for his capacity as labourer or producer. The labour itself has shifted from manual to intellectual. The individual is a slave to impersonal economic, political and social structures. One feels powerless against them. One has either to conform or be marginalized. One is not really free. While one's rationality is overdeveloped, the emotions are not developed at all and often suppressed. At the most one keeps them to oneself. The body is nursed and catered to. The needs of the spirit are ignored. There is intense competition to survive and to succeed in life. The other is the enemy. Under these conditions egoism becomes a virtue. People demand their individual rights. Their duties to others are largely ignored. Having (more and more) rather than being becomes one's aim in life. Even love, centred on the self, becomes desire. Personality development programmes help either a narcissistic pursuit of feeling good or prepare appropriate cogs in the wheel of business machines. Meditation techniques are used to promote a mental peace without ethical responsibility.

For the Christian tradition, each individual is unique, specially chosen by God. But the person is always in relationship to others. Even the special gifts that a person has from God is for the community (1 Cor 12). Jesus frees

people from the various oppressive demons through his exorcisms. He liberates people from their guilt. He challenges people to a change of heart. He makes them aware of God's unconditional love for them which humanizes them. He gives the Spirit that frees, encourages, transforms and empowers people from within (Rom 8). His new commandment enjoins people to love each other and to find fulfilment in self-gift. He opens their eyes to transcendence that seeks and finds God in all things. In prayer the person encounters God and reaches out to others in reconciliation (Mt 6:9-13).

Such a Christian vision of the person leads us to develop a spirituality that is at once liberative and integrative, constantly tending towards fullness in relationship to the whole of reality.¹¹ A person can attain freedom through self-discipline. One becomes free by mastery over one's desires and by learning to discern and choose and not follow the current fads. At the same time through symbolic action one seeks to integrate one's body, emotions and mind, in relation to the world, to the other and to God. One achieves such integration, not in withdrawing from the world, but by creatively engaging in it, because one's own fullness depends on the fullness of all. A person finds his/her fullness in being a person for others. Such openness finds expression in service. A community of free individuals is shaped by conversation and collaboration. Life becomes a mutual gift. It is in this way that one escapes being stereotyped.

A Counterculture

Modern culture has its roots in science and technology as they have been understood and practised in recent times. Science brackets out of consideration whatever cannot be observed and measured. Nor has it use for causes that are not internal to the reality that one is dealing with. Therefore, all transcendence is ignored and considered irrelevant, if not denied. Humans claim to be self-sufficient. The power of reason is absolutized into rationalism when it is made the ultimate arbiter of human knowledge and experience. Technology makes use of the laws discovered by science for controlling reality and for production. It has an exploitative approach to reality. Even people are not protected against its intrusion as contemporary bio-technologies show. Widespread use of technology also gives rise to a sense of power over things. People feel that they can solve all problems and reach all goals that interest them, given the necessary time and resources for the development of appropriate technologies. Science and technology can of course be used for praiseworthy ends. But objectified and idolized, they give rise to a spirit of materialism and secularism. The human is reduced to the body and its exaggerated consumer needs. Humans become objects to be manipulated by economic, political and social forces. Nature is violated and exploited. People's attitude to nature seems to go hand in hand with their attitude to women. Women are treated as sex-objects, and violence against them is rampant in various forms. All these factors feed into a culture of egoism and violence. The me-

dia disseminate these predominant cultural values through advertisements and alienating entertainments.¹²

To a culture centred on matter and the ego, Jesus opposes a counterculture that is centred on God and the other.¹³ But God is not seen as an otherworldly reality that alienates us from this world. God is present in this world as its creator and sustainer, so that we are led to see God in all things and all things in God. The autonomy of the world, of cultural creativity, of science and technology is not denied, but it is relativized and made subject to ultimate concerns. God is the ruler! "Seek first the Kingdom of God . . ." (Mt 6:33) In this world order, the relationship of the humans to others and to the world is not characterised by domination, exploitation and violence, but by dialogue, gift and service. The Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:21-48) offers Jesus' view of a counterculture. Soares-Prabhu has summarised this well. The new society that Jesus proposes is one

in which violence is eradicated at its roots (vv. 21-26), where women are no longer treated as sex objects and discriminated against by men (27-32), where simplicity of speech and the transparency of interhuman relationships make external guarantees unnecessary (33-37), where order is maintained not through the fear of retaliation but through the concern of love (38-42), and where men and women accept each other, across all barriers of class, caste, race and culture, as the children of the one Father in heaven (43-48).¹⁴

In today's world, materialist and secularist perspectives are being in-

creasingly abandoned. There is an increasing interest in the divine and in transcendence, even if it does not always translate into interest in existing institutional religions. Ecological and Feminist movements are suggesting and demanding a new way of looking at and treating nature and women. People speak of appropriate technologies and suggest that there are limits to growth. A new quest for peace stresses the need for dialogue and collaboration. Subaltern cultures that are closer to nature and more sensitive to community are challenging dominant and exploiting cultures. We are challenged then to join these countercultural forces and struggle for cultural transformation.

Prophetic Religion

In the field of religion, fundamentalist groups in every religion promote an irrelevant and alienating religion. Religious institutions continue to impose conformity and ritualism and to subdue, if not kill, charisms and prophecy. Communalism seeks to use religion for promoting economic and political goals. On the other hand, contemporary economic and political structures seek to privatize religion. Religions themselves tend to be as much legitimating the existing structures as acting prophetically towards them. In this context, people seek to transcend the divisive force of religions by promoting nonreligious secular societies and by searching for a common rational foundation for a global ethic.¹⁵

Jesus came in the line of the Hebrew Prophets. He is critical of ritualism and legalism that are the bane of

all institutionalized religions. He keeps alive the prophetic force of religion by insisting, on the one hand, that true religion is of the heart and of intention and not merely of external observance and, on the other, that the truth of religion will be tested by praxis, by what one does for the poor and the needy (Mt 25). He points to the oppressive structures of Satan and Mammon and offers the gift of the Spirit that liberates and makes whole. The Spirit of God is also creative, "making all things new".

Jesus' vision of a new society will demand a twofold reform of religion. Every religion must be open to prophetic voices and movements, so that there is a process of reform and renewal. Prophets are not lacking in any age. But they are not listened to and often get killed. Today some of the challenges for religious reform may also come from other cultures and religions with which we come into contact through the vagaries of history. The second kind of reform demands that each religion sheds its exclusive pretensions and learns to collaborate with other religions in the common task of providing a common moral and spiritual foundation to secular life and society. This can be done only through mutual respect, dialogue and collaboration.

Conclusion

We believe that Jesus did not only have a vision for a new society, but that

he inaugurated it in deed and word and called and commissioned a group of disciples to be the symbols and servants of this new society. This group of disciples constitute the Church. But unfortunately the Church is far from being an authentic symbol of the Kingdom in today's world. Its life and structures seem to be more influenced by the culture of the contemporary world than by the values of the Kingdom. Though it is involved with the poor, it presents the image of a rich institution. It is one of the few remaining institutions that has a structure of absolute power that is accountable to no one. It has adapted itself easily to prevailing social divisions and discriminations over which the symbolic celebration of the Eucharist has no impact. Its focus is still on individual and otherworldly salvation. It is not a leader of countercultural movements, though often it hesitantly and belatedly follows them. While Prophets are never wanting, they do not always have an easy time in the Church. Jesus' vision of a new society, therefore, faces the Church with a twofold challenge: to make Jesus' vision an ecclesial vision and to collaborate with all countercultural movements in being a prophetic voice and presence calling for social transformation everywhere. It is in and through the Christians as disciples of Jesus that Jesus' vision has to become one of the forces for transformation in society.

Notes

1. Concerning the Kingdom see John Fullenbach, *The Kingdom of God*, Indore: Satprakashan, 1994, and *Proclaiming His Kingdom*, Manila: Logos, 1992.

2. G. Soares-Prabhu, "The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Vision of a New Society", in D. S. Amalorpavadass (ed.), *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, Bangalore: National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre, 1981, p. 601.
3. Ibid., p. 607.
4. *Reinventing Revolution* is the title of a book by Gail Omvedt in which she gives an account of agricultural, ecological, feminist and other revolutionary movements in India. See *Reinventing Revolution. New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India*, Armonk, N. Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993.
5. For a detailed explanation of the scheme, see M. Amaladoss, *Towards Fullness*, Bangalore: National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre, 1994, pp. 30-42.
6. See Ulrich Duchrow, *Alternative to Global Capitalism*, Heidelberg: Kairos Europa, 1995; U. Duchrow, "God or Mammon: Economies in Conflict", in *Mission Studies* 13 (1996) 32-67; C. René Padilla, "The Relevance of the Jubilee in Today's World", Ibid., pp. 12-31.
7. Prof. Amartya Sen's works include: *Inequality Reexamined*, Delhi: Oxford, 1992; *On Ethics and Economics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.
8. Cf. B. Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for A New Age*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984; Judith M. Green, "Educational Multiculturalism, Critical Pluralism, and Deep Democracy", in Cynthia Willet (ed), *Theorizing Multiculturalism*. Malden/Oxford: Blackwells, 1998, pp. 422-448.
9. Amy Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
10. Cf. E. Franklin Dukes, *Resolving Public Conflicts,. Transforming Community and Governance*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.
11. See M. Amaladoss, *Towards Fullness*; Raimon Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993.
12. Cf. Ashis Nandy (ed), *Science, Hegemony and Violence. A Requiem for Modernity*, Delhi: Oxford, 1988; Claude Alvares, *Science, Development and Violence. The Revolt Against Modernity*, Delhi: Oxford, 1994.
13. See S. Kappen, *Jesus and Cultural Revolution. An Asian Perspective*. Bombay: Build, 1983; Idem., *Tradition, Modernity, Counterculture. An Asian Pererspective*. Bangalore: Visthar, 1994.
14. G. Soares-Prabhu, *art.cit.*, p. 606.
15. Hans Kueng and Karl-Josef Kuschel (eds.), *A Global Ethic*, London: SCM, 1993.