



Jnanadeepa

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Editorial: Our Commitment to a United India

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Abstract: There is growing awareness among people today of the need for an integrated approach to life and reality. Fragmentation of knowledge is a great danger in our time. Disciplines are getting more and more specialised and tend increasingly to pursue their research in isolation from other disciplines. In this situation *Jnanadeepa* seeks to provide a critical, creative and interdisciplinary approach so that the major questions of our times can be studied from various perspectives. It will address the issues that confront the Church and the country from philosophical, theological and social science perspectives. It will also draw on the rich cultural heritage of India, thereby endeavoring to develop an Indian Christian perspective on them. The focus of this issue of the journal is on our common commitment to India.

Keywords: Commitment to India, India, National identity, Jnanadeepa

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Editorial

There is a growing awareness among people today of the need for an integrated approach to life and reality. Fragmentation of knowledge is a great danger in our time. Disciplines are getting more and more specialised and tend increasingly to pursue their research in isolation from other disciplines. In this situation *Jnanadeepa* seeks to provide a critical, creative and interdisciplinary approach so that the major questions of our times can be studied from various perspectives. It will address the issues that confront the Church and the country from philosophical, theological and social science perspectives. It will also draw on the rich cultural heritage of India, thereby endeavouring to develop an Indian Christian perspective on them.

In the 50th year of our Independence, things are not going well in our country. According to some observers of the contemporary scene, the Indian Republic is heading towards disaster. As Mr. Chandra Shekhar remarks: "What is happening is: We are falling apart. We are in a mad rush towards disintegration."¹ This is certainly an exaggeration. All the same, it is true that the country is passing through a critical period. Signs of the crisis are many and varied: the decay of national institutions; the polarisation of political parties; the growth of communalism and regionalism; the discontent of the poverty-stricken masses; growing violence; rampant corruption; and so on. What is very unfortunate is the fact that the forces of disintegration receive support and encouragement from greedy and power-hungry politicians. They unscrupulously exploit religion, caste, ethnic diversity and economic disparity for political mobilisation. All this adversely affects the all round growth of the nation.

As has been pointed out:

Modern India faces a stark choice – it can accept divisions of its society which will lead to continuing poverty and undermine social progress, or it can work to integrate the concept of nationhood and build a prosperous future.²

It is against this background that the first issue of *Jnanadeepa* has chosen as its theme: *Our Commitment to a United India*. The unity we envisage is a unity in diversity which is consonant with the composite culture of this land. As communalism threatens to tear apart the very fabric of the nation we begin with an empirical study of this phenomenon. The different religious traditions of India can make a significant contribution to national unity. Hence we highlight the possible contributions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. Other papers deal with

the problems and challenges which arise from the experience of the tribal people as well as the Dalit Christians. In the multi-religious context of the country the founding fathers opted for a secular state. What does secularism mean? One of the articles discusses the nature of secularism.

The writers of the papers make no claim to completeness and definiteness. They seek to explore the possible pathways to the future. What they have said, they hope, will stimulate further reflection leading to action.

Kurien Kunnumpuram, SJ

1. Chandra Shekhar, "The Real Untouchable Is not the BJP, It Is Me", *The Times of India*, Mumbai, December 19, 1997, p. 17.
 2. Srichand P. Hinduja, "Our 'Hindu' Identity: A Vision for the Millennium", *The Times of India*, Mumbai, December 11, 1997, p. 13.
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