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Editorial: Vision of a New Society: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Kurien Kunnumpuram, SJ

Abstract: Standing at the threshold of a new century, a new millennium, we wonder what the future holds in store for us. What will be the shape of things to come? What kind of a society is likely to emerge in our country and the world at large? No one knows for certain what the emerging society would really be like. But it is probably true to say that different traditions and disciplines will make a contribution to the shaping of the society of the future. Hence, this issue of *Jnanadeepa* seeks to explore the possible contributions of various traditions and disciplines.

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***Jnanadeepa*: Pune Journal of Religious Studies**

Jnanadeepa (=“Light of Wisdom” pronounced as *Ṭṇ¹nad»pa*) is a biannual interdisciplinary journal of religious studies from an Indian Christian perspective. It is closely associated with Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth: Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune 411014, India.

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Editorial

Standing at the threshold of a new century, a new millennium, we wonder what the future holds in store for us. What will be the shape of things to come? What kind of a society is likely to emerge in our country and the world at large?

No one knows for certain what the emerging society would really be like. But it is probably true to say that different traditions and disciplines will make a contribution to the shaping of the society of the future. Hence, this issue of *Jnanadeepa* seeks to explore the possible contributions of various traditions and disciplines.

For more than a hundred years, two systems, capitalism and socialism, presented themselves as two alternative ways of organizing the socio-economic and political life of human beings in this world. The ideological conflicts between the proponents of these systems dominated the recent history of humanity. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the failure of the communist regimes of East Europe, capitalism seems to have emerged as the victorious social system. This raises some questions. Is capitalism, then, an acceptable model of society for all, especially for the countries of the Third world? What is the future of socialism? Two articles in this issue deal with these questions.

For us in India, it is Mahatma Gandhi who proposed a vision of a new society which is different from that of socialism and capitalism. There is reason to believe that the Gandhian vision has an appeal beyond the boundaries of this country. That is why one article discusses it. Closely connected with it is the vision of a new society implicit in Hinduism, since the Mahatma was deeply influenced by it. One article deals with the Hindu vision of society. There are three articles in the issue which develop a Christian perspective on the new society. They try to draw inspiration from the Bible and the Christian tradition in order to project the vision of a new society.

The two articles from the Islamic and the Jewish perspectives are quite significant. It is the contention of the author of the first article that Islam has to undergo certain changes before it can make a contribution to the development of the new society. And the writer of the second one believes that Israel, if it wishes to be faithful to its own religious tradition, has to work for a just and equitable solution of the Palestinian problem.

Psychology and philosophy are also concerned about the future of humanity. There is an article which, from a psychological point of view,

suggests a new model for India, which is also applicable to other countries which has a multireligious situation. Another one discusses the new society from a philosophical point of view.

Included in this issue is also an article on the new society from a feminist perspective. It is becoming increasingly clear that the neglect of women and their view-point has been harmful to humanity at large.

It is our fond hope that the articles presented here will stimulate a lively discussion on the kind of future society we need to envision and encourage people to work hard for the creation of the society of their dreams.

Kurien Kunnumpuram SJ