

# People's Reporter

A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## Emergency call from Gaza

**“Our will to live and fight cannot be broken by rockets and grenades”**

Martin Lejeune

Gaza City, 31 July 2014: I am in the Gaza Strip since 22 July and still cannot believe what is happening here. I am experiencing the worst days of my life. All people in Gaza experience the worst days of their lives. Such massive attacks on Gaza are without precedent. Behind these words hide human tragedies. The humanitarian catastrophe has reached its peak.

[Martin Lejeune is, currently, the only German journalist in Gaza.]

The war in Gaza is a war against civilians. I am not the only one saying this, but also the people in Gaza alongside all the journalists that I speak to, who have covered all the wars of the past 10 years (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, etc...). What is happening here has a new quality.

Rockets strike everywhere. In residential houses, where families are living, in mosques where people are praying. During the early evening hours of July 30<sup>th</sup> an F16 jet bombarded the residential building just across the street from our house. We were just sitting on the balcony when the rocket hit the house only 50m away. Just seconds before, I heard the donkey hysterically screaming, as if he could foresee the attacks wanting

to warn us.

Debris hit the walls of our house and only missing us by inches. Suddenly we sit in a cloud of dust. The dust covers my glasses and my laptop. The dust crunches between my teeth. It takes about half a minute until the dust settles. Now I can see the father, with whom I have just talked on the street, how he hides with his children behind an excavator, to look for cover if a second strike follows. The excavator is on a parking lot in front of our house and belongs to the owner of a construction company. I run immediately to the rubble of the bombed residential house and see the injured. I have already seen the family multiple times walking down the street. With my mobile phone, I record how the ambulances arrive and transport the injured to the hospital. On

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## Black Day for Dalit Rights

# Blatant act of religious discrimination

Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims have been observing August 10 as Black Day since 2010, as it is the date on which the controversial order was signed in 1950.

All Christian denominations in India plan to observe August 10 as Black Day to protest against the discrimination meted out by government to Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims by not granting them scheduled caste status.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and National Council of Dalit Christians (NCDC) will offer special Mass and prayers on the day.

Meetings, rallies, demonstrations, hunger fasts, submitting memoranda, candle vigils and other forms of

demonstrations will also be organized by the Christian communities throughout India to show support and solidarity to the suffering Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin.

CBCI said that blocking scheduled caste benefits to Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims is a blatant act of religious discrimination and in contravention of the Constitutional provision of equality. The communities are denied of their Constitutional rights for more than 64 years.

The 1950 Order made reservation in education and jobs available to those from low-caste that follow Hinduism. It was later modified to include Sikhs and Buddhists. But it still excludes Christians and Muslims.

The Christian community renewed its demand to the government of India to come forward to resolve the issue without further delay and that it should give appropriate answer to the query of the Supreme Court.

A Civil Writ petition filed in 2004 in the

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## UN Representative breaks down

Israel bombed a (second) UN school in a Palestinian refugee camp sheltering Palestinian evacuees on 29 July killing “children as they slept next to their parents on the floor”. Mr Christopher Gunness, director for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, broke down sobbing during a live television interview with Al-Jazeera, as he described how Israeli shells had struck the Jabalia Elementary Girls School in the Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza, killing at least 15 and wounding at least 100.

The Israeli attack on the UN school came despite 17 warnings by the UN to the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) informing the IDF on the position of the UN school



Mr. Christopher Gunnes addresses the press conference

shelter to ensure that it would be spared. “The rights of Palestinians, even their children, are wholesale denied, and it’s appalling” said Mr Christopher Gunness.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the Israeli attack as outrageous and unjustifiable, saying: “It demands accountability and justice...nothing is more shameful than attacking sleeping children.”

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**People's Reporter**  
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**International relations  
not to foster principles**

The US administration that denied visa twice to Mr. Narendra Modi to visit that country has been restless to have an early meeting with him after he became the Prime Minister of India in May. Even when the election trend was found in favour of him, the US showed apologetic gestures to befriend him. This might have surprised many who believed that the Ministry of External Affairs of all countries would uphold and protect lofty values and principles in international affairs.

The rank of the Minister for External Affairs in the cabinet is graded as No.2 or 3 almost everywhere; and all governments spend considerable amounts of money to maintain Diplomatic Missions in other countries. Only a very few realize that this is being done not to uphold lofty principles in international affairs but to expand their trade interests. The much hyped 3-day visit of, the US Secretary of State Mr. John Kerry and the US Commerce Secretary Ms. Penny Protzkey in the first week of August to New Delhi reiterates this. The agenda for discussion with the Prime Minister of India consisted of four items: 1. Expanding bilateral trade, 2. Improving India's energy security, 3. Stepping up defence purchases from the US; and 4. Sharing of terror intelligence.

One has to examine these items in the context of the high level discussions scheduled to be held between Mr. Modi and Mr. Barak Obama at Washington in September. It must be noted that the meeting between Mr. Modi and Mr. Kerry took place when Israel intensified bombing on the helpless civilians in Gaza, leaving the number of the dead to around 1500. The bombing by Israel with the support of the US is a blatant violation of international law and human rights. Although the UN has condemned this, India did not raise this issue in the discussion with Mr. Kerry. Such an approach is against the tradition India has maintained in similar issues. The silence of the US and India on this issue must be very strongly condemned.

The intention of the US was very clear in the discussions: expanding her trade with India and increasing her export to India. Ms. Sushma Swaraj, Minister for External Affairs, mentioned the country's objection to NSA's surveillance of Indian leaders and consulates. But, Mr. Kerry did not take that issue into discussion. Although the government of India refused to sign the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the WTO prepared in the Bali meeting; the discussion did not seek to bring any change in the agenda for the discussion between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the US in September. Raising of the FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) cap in more areas is a long standing demand of the US. The new government conceded this demand. Still the US wants more from India to expedite the revival of her economy. It must be appreciated that India is now taking a strong stand on the WTO agreement. But the indications are that Mr. Modi would yield to the demands of President Obama when they would meet at Washington in September, by opening the Indian economy more to the benefit of the US. Because of the influence of the corporates, on the government, there is every change India would yield to the American pressure.

**Thought for the Fortnight**

Never stand begging for  
what you have the power to earn.

— Miguel de Cervantes

**A people's Christology?  
Three things  
contributed to  
Jesus' Crucifixion**

John Sutcliffe

It would be a charge difficult to deny; kingdom is a political word.  
Thus on three counts all related to his integrity and unwillingness to modify the nature of his ministry,  
Jesus was arrested, convicted and hung.

*(Rev. Dr. John Sutcliffe is a minister of the United Reformed Church currently assisting in an Anglican Parish. The author of several books on Christian Education, he is retired from being Course Director, then President, of the Ecumenical Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester. Second and concluding part of a lecture given in Gloucester, England in June 2014).*



Jesus expressed in his life and priorities the practice and vision of a new social order which he called the kingdom of God. (The more Jewish phrase Kingdom of heaven is used in Matthew; kingdom of God is used in Mark and Luke) The kingdom or reign of God was partly a reinterpretation and universalising of Jesus' Jewish faith. Jesus' Jewishness is, possibly, most evident in his use of the Commandments; his summary included the Shema and a quotation from Leviticus. Or in the Lord's Prayer which is very much like contemporary Jewish prayers, though, because of its pedestrian nature, the absence of thanksgiving and of love, and internal contradictions, I suggest it may

not be a prayer. Rather it might have originated in an early Christian community as a list of catechetical topics. Or in the Lord's Supper which was based on a Jewish meal but which with Christ presiding became a metaphor of the new community, the kingdom.

Jesus was inclusive in outlook. He welcomed into his company many people who were not generally accepted in society - a sick woman, lepers, tax collector, children- and gave women a place in his company they did not have in society as a whole. He seemed ready to care about foreigners, especially Samaritans, while limiting himself to travelling in Israel. His

inclusiveness is also intriguingly evident in the saying: 'whoever is not against us is for us' Mark 9.40 and 'whoever is not against you is for you' Luke 9.50. I suggest Mark and Luke express the Gentile position whereas Matthew in 12.30 'whoever is not with me is against me' gives us the Jewish position. The Gentile position seems nearer to the practice and mind of Christ. As well as leading to the inclusion in his company of people of all conditions, it sets his followers free to delight in the company of and to work as partners with people of other faiths and of no faith.

Of supreme importance was Jesus' integrity. His words and actions were one. His integrity led to his death. Having challenged the hypocrisy of some of the Jewish leaders I cannot imagine Jesus' escaping the charge of hypocrisy had not his words and actions been completely integrated. Three things contributed to his arrest and crucifixion. Jesus came from Nazareth, a poor, over taxed part of Israel, that was an area of political unrest. The poor people followed him. The crowds and

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**Black day for Dalit rights**

**The government must come forward  
to resolve the issue  
without further delay**

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Supreme Court of India praying the deletion of paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Caste) order 1950 is still pending since the Government is not replying.

Last year CBCI represented by SC/BC office and NCCI have implored in the above mentioned case.

Different commissions appointed by the Government

have recommended that Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims should be included in the Scheduled Caste list.

Most of the National and Regional political parties have supported the demand of Scheduled Caste status to Christians and Muslims of Scheduled Caste Origin by writing letters to the Prime Minister and concerned authorities.

In Delhi, the Black Day will be observed on August 12 from 4.30 to 5.30 pm at CNI Bhawan by CBCI, NCCI and NCDC.

**Archbishop Anil Couto of Delhi, Archbishop Vincent Concessao, Emeritus of Delhi and Mr. Alwan Masih, Church of North India (CNI) General Secretary will preside over the programme.**

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## Gender Non-inclusiveness

## Union Budget 2014-15 and Women

Vibhuti Patel

*(Dr. Vibhuti Patel noted feminist and social activist, is the Head of the Dept. of Economics, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai).*

The Union Budget 2014-15 will largely benefit neo-middle class, and offer comfort to middle and upper class women as consumers. The poor women will be crushed due to macro-economic policies that will fuel inflation, land alienation and user fees for education and health facilities.

This time even women's groups have not raised their voice against gender non-inclusive aspects of the Union Budget.

After the terms Gender Budgeting and Gender Mainstreaming were officially introduced in 2004 by the UPA government, many State Governments like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Kerala, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Nagaland, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have adopted Gender Budgeting. Gender Budget Cells were designed to serve as focal points for coordinating gender budgeting initiatives within their Ministries and across departments. 56

The Union budget 2014-15 offers old and new schemes but fails to address macro-economic and social causes of exploitation and subordination of women.

Ministries/Departments have confirmed setting up of a cell/nominating a nodal person. This could materialize because the previous government's Ministry of Women and Child Development, in collaboration with UN Women, had developed a Manual and Handbook for Gender Budgeting for Gender Budget Cells for Central Ministries and Departments. The current Union Budget of 2014-15 has seen that the Gender Budget Cells play a major role in budgetary allocations.

What is gender budgeting?

**Gender Budgeting does not relate to a separate budget for women but involves comparative analysis and construction of general budgets from a gender perspective. It helps governments to decide how policies need to be made, adjusted and reprioritized. It is a tool for effective policy implementation where one can check if gender commitments are translated into financial commitments.**

The Gender Budget Initiative

is a policy framework, methodology and a set of tools to assist governments to integrate a gender perspective into the budget as the main national plan of public expenditure. It also aims to facilitate attention to gender analysis in review of macroeconomic performance, ministerial budget preparations, parliamentary debate and mainstream media coverage. Budget impacts women's lives in several ways. It directly promotes women's development through allocation of budgetary funds for women's programmes or reduces opportunities for empowerment of women through budgetary cuts.

The Union Budget 2014-15 has retained all schemes for empowerment of women and girls of the last decade under the Women & Child Development with Rs 18691 crores allocated for Integrated Child Development Services, Rs. 715 crores for National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) and Rs. 400 crores for

Integrated Child Protection Scheme. A new scheme was launched also – 'Beti bachao Beti padhao' with Rs 100 crore.

**The schemes can be classified into 4 categories:**  
Protective Services:

These include allocations on women's homes and care institutions, rehabilitation schemes for victims of atrocities, pensions for widows and destitute women etc. which are aimed at mitigating the consequences of women's social and economic subordination, rather than addressing the root causes of this subordination.

For example Sabla, Swadhar-scheme for women in Difficult Circumstances, Ujjawala Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-Integration of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Scheme of Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls, Scheme for Welfare of Working Children in

Need of Care and Protection.

Social Services:

These include schemes for education and health of women, support services like crèche and hostels and also water supply sanitation and schemes on fuel and fodder, which contribute significantly to women's empowerment, either directly by building their capacities and ensuring their material well-being, or indirectly through reducing domestic drudgery.

For example, the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), General Grant-in-aid (GIA) Scheme for Assistance to Voluntary Organisations in the field of Women and Child Development, General Grant-in-Aid Scheme in the field of Women and Child Development, Family Counseling Centre Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme For the Children of Working Mothers, Nutrition Education and Training through Community Food & Nutrition Extension Units (CFNEUS), Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY), Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG)

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## A people's Christology?

## The basis of a down to earth, dynamic and liberating people's Christology

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occasional instances of Jesus putting responding to human need before keeping the detail of the law unnerved the authorities. Knowing this he did not desert the people or deviate from his chosen path. Then, Jesus taught and showed in his dealings with people that God is love in daily life. God is what happens between people not predominantly what happens in elaborate ceremonies. This, together with Jesus' criticism of some of the religious leaders and his understanding of God in his own life led to his being charged with blasphemy. And he spoke of a new kingdom. That crowds gathered around Jesus suggested he might have a political agenda and his use of the word kingdom probably confirmed for the High Priests that this was so. It would be a charge difficult to deny; kingdom is a political word. Thus on three counts all related to his integrity and unwillingness to modify the nature of his ministry, Jesus was

It would be a charge difficult to deny; kingdom is a political word. Thus on three counts all related to his integrity and unwillingness to modify the nature of his ministry, Jesus was arrested, convicted and hung.

arrested, convicted and hung.

Jesus did not die offering himself to God as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins as Paul, working out his theology irrespective of the evidence of Jesus' life, claims. Jesus died because of his integrity, as many of his followers have down the ages. The Parable of Prodigal Son seems authentic not least because its message is so distinctive and different from what was believed in much of the early church. At its heart is Jesus' trust in the love of God. The unquestioning welcome, forgiveness, reinstatement and love shown to the wayward son by the Father is a clear challenge to those who believe that the forgiveness of God is won only through the sacrifice of Jesus. God is generous love in action. The lines in the hymn, 'There is a green hill far away' reflect so much popular theology: 'He died

that we might be forgiven, He died to make us good..' But such magical sentiments would have been unintelligible to the Gospel writers, not excluding the Johannine community and the reference to the lamb of God.

Many people experienced Jesus as a transfiguring or resurrecting influence. In the story of the transfiguration it was not he who was transfigured but the watching disciples. The 'penny dropped' for them, as the philosopher theologian Bishop Ian Ramsey might have said. They saw the glorious reality of the man they were following and the meaning of their daily lives was transformed. Transfiguration is another way of speaking of resurrection as a principle of life.

In these seven characteristic ways in which the first Christians perceived and experienced Jesus I suggest we can find an

approach to Christology which relates to the lives of ordinary people and portrays a Christ who is the power of salvation for the nations. In Jesus' emphasis on human responsibility, his caring for people, his understanding of God, his commitment to a new social order, his inclusiveness, his integrity and his transforming influence, are pointers to experiences which people can see are common to their lives, to their aspirations and to the ambiguities of experience. This common experience seems unrelated to the traditional creeds of the churches and can be expressed without the use of traditional religious language. Ordinary people finding themselves in Jesus' experience and finding Jesus in their experience might be the basis of a down to earth, dynamic and liberating people's Christology



**BURN**  
with desire,  
**YEARN**  
for greatness,  
**LEARN**  
to work hard,  
that will be the  
**TURNING**  
point in your  
life.

## Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries

# A Significant Achievement for the Small-scale Fisheries

Nalini Nayak

On June 9, 2014, 116 member countries out of 143 that met at the FAO – 31<sup>st</sup> Committee on Fisheries adopted the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. These Guidelines are voluntary and hence are not binding but as a complement to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of 1995 which has grown to be a standard for fisheries management globally. These Guidelines hopefully will grow to be a standard for sustainable fishing and livelihoods at the national level.

**In content, these guidelines are 'radical'. For the first time there is a UN document that relates to food production not only in terms of its economic value and role in alleviating hunger, but highlights its importance as a way of life that has evolved over time sustaining communities that have developed their own traditional knowledge in utilizing and managing the coastal and inland water resources.**

Particularly significant is the fact that the Guidelines indicate that responsible fisheries can be assured only if the human rights of these communities to life and livelihood throughout the value chain are secure as they recognize the role that both men and women, as owner operators or workers, play in small scale fisheries and in turn their importance in poverty alleviation and food security. In referring to the life of the communities the Guidelines particularly stress all the aspects of social development that are required to uphold the livelihood of communities that live on the aquatic resources.

Interestingly, small scale fisheries themselves are not defined as this varies from region to region and since they operate only within national waters, each country can define its own small scale fisheries. The Guidelines nevertheless speak of the rights of fishing communities to both

land and water tenure as this is the base of livelihood. They also recognize the need to pay special attention to the marginalized and vulnerable groups while particularly highlighting the rights of the indigenous communities in keeping with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, 2007. They speak about the importance of developing participatory fisheries management systems based on the ecosystem approach and involving both men and women in the governance of fisheries.

These guidelines are path breaking both in content and in what they demand in terms of management. They call for an interdisciplinary approach to governance as sustaining fishing livelihoods is not merely a technical fisheries matter. They call for a cross section of departments – fisheries, revenue, forests, health, education to name the major ones – to interact and focus on the development of people and food production. In one single instrument both the issues of responsible fisheries and the social development of communities are addressed. According to Rolf Willman who gave leadership to the process in the FAO, 'these Guidelines have brought about a paradigm shift in the international discourse on rights in fisheries which, until the mid 2000s,

narrowly focused on fishing rights – primarily individualized rights'.

These guidelines are certainly an achievement for small scale fishing communities worldwide and they can certainly celebrate this as the Guidelines have not sprung out of the blue. They have resulted from a conjuncture of several factors but initiated by the protests of the small scale fishers themselves in the mid 1980s.

The first such demand at global level took place when fishworkers from around the world gathered in Rome in 1984 at a parallel or alternative conference to the official FAO conference that met to discuss the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This alternate conference was titled the *International Conference for Fishworkers and their Supporters* when over 100 fishworkers and supporters demanded that the small scale fisheries be recognized and that their contribution to world food production be valorized. Their voice went unheeded at the conference but did raise the concern of the nations as in 1982 of around 81 million tonnes of world fish catches, 75 million tonnes was contributed by small scale fishers and remains so today. In Asia and Africa, fish accounted for more than half the animal protein intake and small

scale fisheries provided over three quarters of this requirement. Despite the initial rebuffs, these fish workers pursued their demands and also consolidated their organizations in different parts of the world.

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries which has no binding impact for the nation states has over the years provided guidelines for fisheries management and dispute mitigation when the need arises. But despite this, the management of fisheries continues to be difficult and even disputed as some fisheries continue to deplete, some irreparably despite 'scientific' management.

In the early 1990s, the FAO granted consultative status to the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) which was created by the supporters in 1986. With this commenced an era of NGO participation in the otherwise international inter governmental Process. Hence the perspective of the small scale fishers gradually began to enter the official debates and public discourse. The participation of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) gradually increased.

In 2000 the fish worker organizations around the world created their own World Forums – the World Forum of Fish Workers and Fish Harvesters

(WFF) and the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP). In 2007, the ICSF organized a workshop in Siem Reap, Cambodia "Asserting Rights, Defining responsibilities". It was then observed that responsible fisheries can be assured only if the human rights of fishing communities, including the rights to decent work and labour standards and human development are secure. In 2008, Civil Society Organisations held a workshop prior to the FAO conference titled 'Securing Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries: Bringing together Responsible Fisheries and Social Development' and since then reiterated the demand for an international instrument on small scale fisheries. At its 29<sup>th</sup> Session the UN Committee on Fisheries (COFI) decided to develop such an instrument. The CSOs immediately created a platform comprising the two international Fishworker Forums, the ICSF and the International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC).

Between September 2011 and April 2012, the CSOs conducted 14 national consultations as well as one regional consultation in Africa that brought together representatives from 16 countries. More than 1600 people participated in these consultations and consolidated their inputs into

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## Gender Non-inclusiveness

# Gender Mainstreaming of the Budget

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A sum of 100 crores is provided for "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana", a scheme focused to generate awareness and help in improving the efficiency of delivery of welfare services meant for women. This is the first year of the scheme, if funds of Rs. 100 crore are utilized by the state, we can pressure the government to allocate more funds.

New small savings scheme: A special small savings instrument to cater to the requirements of education and marriage of the girl child to be introduced. This would be in line with schemes like Kisan Vikas

Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels.

The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

Patra or National Saving Certificate.

The budget promises drinking water and sanitation. Government would strive to provide toilets and drinking water in all the girls' school in first phase.

The budget also promises that School curriculum will have a separate chapter on gender

mainstreaming. Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design,

implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

Economic services:

These includes\_schemes for training and skill development, and provision for credit, infrastructure, marketing etc.

which are critical to women's economic independence and autonomy.

For example, the STEP Support for Training and Empowerment of Girls, General Grant-in-Aid Scheme for innovative projects, working women's hostel.

**The Union Budget 2014-15 has promised Easy Loan terms where the government will offer concessional loans to women in rural India at 4% in some districts and 7% in other for women self help groups under a scheme called Ajeevika.** ●

**To be continued**

Ecumenism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## Convergence of All Life - Affirming Forces

James Massey

In the context of the 100th Anniversary of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) we are publishing a few articles on 'Ecumenism in the 21st Century' with the objective of contributing to the recapturing of the original vision and to relevant and meaningful reformulation of its concerns and priorities for the 21st century.

The second article in the series by the Rev. Dr. (habil) James Massey. He is the Director of the Centre for Dalit/Minorities Studies and the Community Contextual Communication Centre, New Delhi; and former Member of the National Committee for Minorities (NCM) Government of India.

It is unfortunate to note that in the final statement of the WCC 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly held at Busan in Nov. 2013 the issue of Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims of India was left out, because "it did not meet the necessary criteria" for the inclusion of the issue in the statement. It implies that for the WCC, the so-called "the necessary criteria," is more important than the cause of 'justice' involved in the particular issue.

Now what was this necessary criterion? It was that three official representatives of Indian churches have to endorse the issue with their signatures.

In the light of the global and local challenges, the ecumenical movements should be redefined as 'Convergence of all Life-Affirming Forces.' It underlines the life-centered understanding of oikoumene. The convergence of all life-affirming forces can be made possible at two levels: Micro and Macro.

But the sad thing is that in spite of more than a dozen such Indian representatives were present; any three of them could not come forward to endorse the issue on behalf of the Dalits in India. I was also told at Busan itself that some Dalit leaders approached the then moderator of the Church of South India. He refused to sign. Here the point to be made is that both the WCC at Busan and the Indian moderator seemed to "forget" the theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> assembly: "God of life lead us to justice and peace."

With the exclusion of the Dalit issue the WCC as well as the representatives of 345 member Churches left it to the victims of the unjust society to deal with their issues themselves. It seems they also have forgotten 'God' whom they referred in their theme as the one "who takes the side of the oppressed and poor" (Exodus 3: 7-8) and also the same God who "liberates the oppressed and poor" (Luke 4: 18-19). In the light of the WCC experience, the question that haunts me is: What is the space and future of ecumenism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Ecumenism is understood as unity of churches for the welfare of Christian community in all aspects. It focuses on the

relationship of different churches to stand for the common cause. It has been observed that ecumenism in India is often strengthened to fight against the State, to establish the privileges or to uphold the issues related to Christian community. In the etymological sense, 'ecumenism' is supposed to concern the whole, not only human beings, but also everything that God has created (Genesis 1: 1-31). This, as a process of transformation, enables all the created things to be restored once again to the status of "good" which God himself in the beginning affirmed with his divine word (Gen. 1:25). We see in Eph. 1: 9-11, St. Paul's vision of cosmic unity in Christ, which not only goes beyond the churches' boundaries, but also goes beyond the human boundaries. This in fact once again poses a major challenge to the ecumenical movement to develop a 'life-centered' understanding of the oikoumene, which embraces all God's people as well as the whole of his creations.

A serious analysis of our society will inform us that human community is under the threat of life-negating forces. 'Caste' continues to dominate in all

spheres of society. Corruption has become a daily reality. Poverty still grips the weaker sections of the society. Racial and ethnic discrimination is unabated. The Culture of 'otherness' against 'togetherness' is being promoted in the society. Women, half of the population, live in vulnerability in different forms. Gender sensitivity is getting diminished. The 'dalitness' of Dalits, 'tribalness' of Tribals and 'backwardness' of Backward Communities are being perpetuated in the present social scenario. No religious/faith community in India can disclaim these issues within themselves. On the one hand, they try to cover-up those issues; on the other hand they are not being motivated to combat life-negating forces. Faith communities also perpetuate the 'culture of status quo.' In short, we are not living in 'just' and 'humane' community today.

In the light of the global and local challenges, the ecumenical movements should be redefined as 'Convergence of all Life-Affirming Forces.' It underlines the life-centered understanding of oikoumene. The convergence of all life-affirming forces can be made possible at two levels:

Micro and Macro. The Micro level, attempt should be to bring Christians-institutions, theological seminaries, Churches, NGO, developmental agencies—who can converge for the common cause of building just and human community. It is not 'organic' unity that the ecumenical movements have proposed. Here attempts will be made to explore the possibility of the convergence of like-minded Christians to combat life-negating forces within and outside the community. In the context of rigid denominationalism which kills the spirit of Christian community, a call is made to converge for common agenda to build just and human community in the society.

**It is not 'doctrinal' or 'structural' convergence but the convergence of values and ideas on an action-oriented approach. The challenges in the society and the church demand the Christians to have collective thinking and action beyond denominations, to bring the Kingdom on the earth.**

The convergence at macro level comes out of the belief that no one religious/faith community alone can facilitate the birth of just and humane community in the pluralistic society of India. It means Christians alone cannot combat the life-negating forces that perpetuate oppression,

Contd. Page 7 Col 1 ..>>>

## From Pope Francis

## 10 tips for peace and happiness

1. "Live and let live." Everyone should be guided by this principle, he said, which has a similar expression in Rome with the saying, "Move forward and let others do the same."

2. "Be giving of yourself to others." People need to be open and generous toward others, he said, because "if you withdraw into yourself, you run the risk of becoming egocentric. And stagnant water becomes putrid."

3. "Proceed calmly" in life. The pope, who used to teach high school literature, used an image from an Argentine novel by Ricardo Güiraldes, in which the protagonist — gaucho Don Segundo Sombra — looks back on how he lived his life.

"He says that in his youth he was a stream full of rocks that he carried with him; as an adult, a rushing river; and in old age, he was still moving, but slowly, like a pool" of water, the pope said. He said he likes this latter image of a pool of water — to have "the ability to move with kindness and

Slowing down, being generous and fighting for peace are part of Pope Francis' secret recipe for happiness. In an interview published in part in the Argentine weekly "Viva" dt. July 27, the pope listed his top 10 tips for bringing greater joy to one's life:

humility, a calmness in life."

4. "A healthy sense of leisure." The pleasures of art, literature and playing together with children have been lost, he said.

"Consumerism has brought us anxiety" and stress, causing people to lose a "healthy culture of leisure." Their time is "swallowed up" so people can't share it with anyone.

Even though many parents work long hours, they must set aside time to play with their children; work schedules make it "complicated, but you must do it," he said.

Families must also turn off the TV when they sit down to eat because, even though television is useful for keeping up with the news, having it on during mealtime "doesn't let you communicate" with each other, the pope said.



5. Sundays should be holidays. Workers should have Sundays off because "Sunday is for family," he said.

6. Find innovative ways to create dignified jobs for young people. "We need to be creative with young people. If they have no opportunities they will get into drugs" and be more vulnerable

to suicide, he said.

"It's not enough to give them food," he said. "Dignity is given to you when you can bring food home" from one's own labor.

7. Respect and take care of nature. Environmental degradation "is one of the biggest challenges we have," he said. "I think a question that we're not asking ourselves is: 'Isn't humanity committing suicide with this indiscriminate and tyrannical use of nature?'"

8. Stop being negative.

"Needing to talk badly about others indicates low self-esteem. That means, 'I feel so low that instead of picking myself up I have to cut others down,'" the pope said. "Letting go of negative things quickly is healthy."

9. Don't proselytize; respect others' beliefs. "We can inspire others through witness so that one grows together in communicating. But the worst thing of all is religious proselytism, which paralyzes: 'I am talking with you in order to persuade you,' No. Each person dialogues, starting with his and her own identity. The church grows by attraction, not proselytizing," the pope said.

10. Work for peace. "We are living in a time of many wars," he said, and "the call for peace must be shouted. Peace sometimes gives the impression of being quiet, but it is never quiet, peace is always proactive" and dynamic.

—UCAN

## Emergency call from Gaza

# Women are still singing their songs

>>> **Contd. from Page 1 Col 2**  
the street lie stones, shards and fallen power poles.

Since I have arrived, countless civilian targets have been bombarded in broad daylight with clear sky and in free sight. Amongst them are a primary school for girls from the United Nations in Beit Hanoun where hundreds of refugees have taken shelter, in spite of the UN having sent the GPS coordinates of the school to the general commandment of the Israeli army. I cannot even recall the exact number of deaths and don't have internet to look it up. Moreover, a park in the refugee camp Schatti has been attacked. The eight children that played in front of it are all dead now. And 17 people died during the late afternoon of the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, when a market in the North of the Gaza strip was bombarded. A further 160 Palestinians injured, who were doing their groceries. The enumeration of the massacres on the civilian population could be continued endlessly, as since the 8<sup>th</sup> of July around 1000 civilians have been killed.

I simply cannot understand the motivation of the Israeli armed forces. Why would they intentionally aim at civilian targets and bombard large gatherings of people. Precise knowledge of the

I simply cannot understand the motivation of the Israeli armed forces. Why would they intentionally aim at civilian targets and bombard large gatherings of people. Precise knowledge of the targets in the cross thread should be available through the surveillance drones, which deliver high resolution imagery. Why are the pilots in their fighter jets deliberately killing women and children. Which ethical standards do these lords of the skies follow that decide over life and death?

targets in the cross thread should be available through the surveillance drones, which deliver high resolution imagery. Why are the pilots in their fighter jets deliberately killing women and children. Which ethical standards do these lords of the skies follow that decide over life and death? They sit in the most modern fighter jets that have been developed to date and brace themselves with their "targeted strikes". That soldiers have to kill soldiers in a war, is legitimized by international law, but that civilians are being intentionally targeted, just like the family in the neighbouring house, the children in the park and the UN refugee school, that is not legally covered under any type of treaty on conducting wars. The people in Gaza ask themselves, why the German and other Western European heads of States not forcefully condemn these violations of international conventions. These are war crimes that the Israeli military is committing on a daily basis.

Even hospitals, a water plant and the only power station of the

Gaza strip have already been hit. In our quarter, in the centre of Gaza City, known as "Beverly Hills" because until three weeks ago possessed a functioning infrastructure, no one has running water anymore. We wash ourselves with water from plastic bottles that we buy at the shop around the corner. Since the night of the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, when the power station was bombarded, we stopped having electricity and internet. The landline is dead too. The mobile phone is the only medium of communication that is still function, which is very expensive when used over long stretches of time. I am sending the text I am writing in the Al Deira Hotel, which owns an own generator and in which the French news agency AFP has its own Wi-Fi network.

There is no more bread in the Gaza Strip. No one can buy bread anymore. We eat the bread, which has been baked by the wife of my host Maher. She bakes it in the inner courtyard of our house in a self-made oven, fired by charcoal. We dip the bread in olive oil and Za'tar, a paste made

from thyme, sesame and salt. We eat this every day. But even if there would be any purchasable bread, we have no money to pay for it. Since the beginning of the war there is no more cash in the cash machines, because the banks are closed and the Ministry of Finance was completely destroyed, so credit cards are not functioning. When we purchase flour or oil in the store around the corner we note our purchases down to pay for them later. Just like everyone else at the moment.

I live in a two-story building around the corner of the Al Amin mosque bombed-out on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July. 10 people lived here before the war. Now it is 70 that share the two flats. My hosts have taken in 60 refugees from the North of the Gaza Strip that has been totally flattened. The men have to sleep in the entrances and the halls and the women and children take the flats. Living and sleeping in such a tight space with so many strangers is not easy and any notion of private sphere has ceased to exist. The nerves are constantly on the edge after three

and a half weeks of continuous bombardment, of which I only experienced one and a half weeks.

**Nevertheless, all 70 inhabitants of this house behave calm and considerate. They share everything they have, a baked bread, the last cigarette, a mobile phone battery or a piece of soap for personal hygiene. Yesterday I was our quarters' kindergarten, where 80 people are sleeping per room.**

Palestinians are as smart as the Lebanese, as intelligent as Iraqis, as strong fighters as the Algerians and as hospitable as the Syrians. Perhaps it is those many positive attributes that enable the people of Gaza to deal with these difficult situations without having to give in.

**Despite the three and a half weeks of bombardment from air, sea and land, children are still playing on the streets, women are still singing their songs while baking bread and men are still resisting. Maher, my host explained: "Our will to live and fight, cannot be broken by rockets and grenades."**

*(This mail from Mr. Martin Lejune was sent to us by Mr. Ranjan Solomon, Consultant, Palestine International Ecumenical Partnership Programme)*

## A Centre for the Differently Abled

## Theeram

Kuriakose Moolayil

Differently abled persons commonly called as disabled, challenged or retarded are the mostly marginalized in the society all over the world, especially in India. In England they were thrown out of the house to depend upon the pennies collected from the street in their 'caps' held in 'hands'. They were called as 'handicapped'.

In India their destiny was so deplorable that they were considered as a curse to the family and an ill omen to the public. In most villages and towns they live in streets mocked, ridiculed and persecuted for fun. In schools they were branded as 'retarded' and outcasts. They were not even considered and included in the official census statistics. Recently they started categorizing all including Autism, Down syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and Mental Retardation in the 'disabled' category.

Physically challenged are comparatively privileged to organize themselves and raise their voice for justice. But the mentally challenged are the most unprivileged to rise against all injustices. The financially affluent in the society send their differently abled children to special school but the under privileged cannot afford to send them in those 'paid' special schools. Those who have competed 18 years of age are also not provided in the special schools. India Centre for Social Change (ICSC - Theeram) established as a non-governmental charitable organization registered under the Government of India Act (Reg. No. 65/2002/IV), an institution under the guidance of H.G. Dr. Geevarghese Mor Coorilos Metropolitan, thought of supporting



'Theeram' Family

these unprivileged individuals and their families by starting day care centres in 5 districts of Kerala.

We provide support services to around 180 differently abled men and women through 11 centres. We emphasize on research, special education, vocational training, health programmes and advocacy by empowerment programmes for the mentally challenged and their families. We provide free transportation, training, food, and uniform through donations from our supporters and well wishers. Above 95% of our benefactors are from below poverty line.

We pick our trainees from their homes and we provide care and training. We drop them back in the evening at their residences. Our programme is focused on supporting the differently abled persons and their families. Our motto is to change lives together in co-operation with the family and the society at large. Presently we need an average of Rs. 350,000/- plus per month for the activities. Most of this resources come unsolicited from our friends and well wishers.

### Residential centre

The main concern shared by the parents in our journey with them was to find a suitable residential service for their children in their old age. One of our parents Mrs. Santhamma Philipose, Puthenpurackal, Thrikkothamanalam, Puthuppally graciously came forward with a donation of a plot of 34 cents of land for the construction of a Residential Centre. The Challenge to construct a residential centre with a facility for 100 persons was really tough. Nevertheless, miraculous help came from different sources and we able to complete more than 90% of the residential building. We trust in God for the rest.

The Government and NGOs are not catering enough support for the welfare of these differently abled persons and their families. The so called 'development' agenda never includes the 2.5% population of God's special creation. Instead they focus on the development of the strong, rich and the affluent in the society. Out of the 278 special schools in Kerala only two are run by the government. Vast majority of these special schools levy heavy fee for training and transport. When the government grant is divided among the elderly physically challenged and for other support schemes, the 'voiceless', the mentally challenged, are again marginalized.

**We have a human duty to support the mentally challenged and to become voice for the voiceless. We have a great advocacy role in this field.**

—Fr. Dr. Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil, is the Director of 'Theeram'.

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Mammen Varkey

*"That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem and talking with each other about all these things that had happened..."*

*.....And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them. Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures,....." Luke 24: 13 - 45.*

The verse, "Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures", Luke 24: 45, as it was shared in the last reflection, is of supreme importance in our faith journey. It is not at all understood adequately. It is unmistakably written that he opened their minds.

**Because of its critical importance let me repeat certain things**

Have we ever cared to stop for a while and think whose mind

was it that he opened? Had we done that we would have been surprised to know that it was the mind of those followers who had gathered there, including the eleven who he had been specially chosen "to be with him, to preach the good news" Mark 3: 14, 15. And who themselves had said "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Luke 24: 34 (RSV). It is very revealing, the eleven and those who were with them, themselves, said that Jesus had risen and Simon had seen him. It means that their mind was, already, open to the

fact of Resurrection. In fact, opening their minds to the fact of Resurrection might not have been very difficult for them. They had seen Lazar and a few others being brought back to life. So someone coming back to life after dying was not an issue incomprehensible for them. Then what was it to which their mind was still shut? What was it to which the Risen one had to open their minds?

**The same problem, the two followers who walked to Emmaus, faced**

It was the same problem that the two followers who walked to Emmaus faced. The two followers said to Jesus that they had believed that he would redeem Israel. What was it that happened in between? The Cross. They could not believe at all the Cross, the way of the Cross, would lead to the redemption of Israel. The military and might, arms and force would redeem Israel. How can the Cross! Again, they could not see at all that the Risen Lord would walk as a very ordinary, totally unrecognizable man! Had he come in chariot and in glory, the two would have easily

recognized. The Risen Master had to open their eyes. Luke 24: 21. Here too, the eleven and the others did not believe that it was the way of the Cross that would redeem Israel. "At that hour Jesus said to crowds, "..... But all this has taken place, that the scriptures of the prophet might be fulfilled. "then all the disciples forsook him and fled." Mathew 26: 55, 56. The disciples had, already, forsaken and fled, from the way of the Cross - for the fulfillment of the prophets! Again, they found it absolutely incomprehensible that the Risen Lord would ask such a thing, "Have you anything here to eat?" It was not a ceremonial begging! "They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them." Luke 24: 41- 43. Even in their wild imaginations they could not think that the Risen Lord would be hungry and ask for something to eat. It transcended all their capacity for comprehension.

**Fulfillment of the law of Moses and the Prophets**

Then, the Risen Lord, standing in the midst of the

eleven and the others said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled". No, the eleven, even then, could not believe that 'everything written about him' would be fulfilled that way. Even at that stage the eleven refused to believe. Rather, they found it absolutely impossible to comprehend it. "Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures." Luke 24: 25.

**How can we?**

**If it was impossible even for the chosen eleven who had walked with him, who had been taught by him, who had witnessed the miracles, to comprehend the way of the Cross and the cry for bread, how can we believers who live two thousand years away and in a radically different economic, socio-political and religious context. But it must happen. Then Risen Lord would intervene and would act.**

**To be continued**

## Ecumenism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### Convergence of All Life - Affirming Forces

>>> *Contd. from Page 5 Col 5* discrimination and marginalization and transform the entire society. Therefore, Christians should join hands with other religious communities/groups that uphold and affirm life. It is to be noted that every religion has elements of life-affirmation in some form. That should be tapped and activated in the efforts of convergence. If the life-affirming forces in different religious traditions converge to face common societal challenges and life-threatening issues, the outcome will be 'building a just and humane community.'

Where must we converge? We must converge on serious issues the society faces today. We must converge for internal and external transformation of faith communities. We converge on where justice is derved, inequality prevails, oppression

continues and exploitation is abetted. Our convergence will be for affirming dignified life in the society. For whom do we converge? We converge to bring changes in the life of the victims of caste, racial and ethnic discrimination, sexual harassment, corruption, economic exploitation, abuse etc.

As Christians we have a special role to play in this process because every Christian - ordained or lay is supposed to be committed at the time of baptism to act as transformative force in order to enable and build a humane and just society - which actually means to enable the reign of God on this earth. The space and future of ecumenism depends on the attempts of convergence at micro and macro levels to build up just and human community.

## Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries

### A Significant Achievement for the Small-scale Fisheries

>>> *Contd. from Page 4 Col 5* what they wished to see in the instrument. A synthesis report was made available prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> session of COFI in July 2012. Subsequently the FAO also prepared its Zero Draft of the Guidelines that was sent to all the member countries. The CSO Platform was thrilled to see large sections of its recommendations incorporated in this Zero Draft. The feedback to the base continued and by November 2012 over 4000 primary stakeholders were consulted worldwide through regional and national processes by both the FAO and the CSOs

There were two technical consultations held on the Guidelines in the FAO in May 2013 and February 2014. 88 members of the FAO, representatives of 9 inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and around 80 civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs participated in these consultations. While it was difficult for some of the member countries to understand why this instrument was straying

away from the usual 'technical' aspects of fisheries there were others who seemed to understand the need to do so. The CSOs who spoke in one voice at these Consultations managed to convince the house as to why it was necessary to retain the texts/aspects that referred to the broader life and livelihood aspects of the small scale fisheries, the entire value chain, also referring to other Conventions and Guidelines that had been earlier adopted. In 80% of the cases the house was convinced although some members wanted to add explanations that finally made the text a bit fuzzy. Nevertheless, the text that was finally adopted at the 31<sup>st</sup> session of COFI is an important acknowledgment of the small scale fisheries, its contribution to employment, food security and poverty eradication.

This is the first time in history that small scale production with its web of intricate connections has officially been acknowledged in this way. In a time when everything is growing global and centralized in a

patriarchal manner, when the gaps between the rich and the poor are increasing, when large sections of the people are being dispossessed of survival rights, when the natural resources are being considered as inanimate capital to be exploited, this instrument is indeed a challenge to the forces that be. For all those who believe in the Gandhian decentralized production and panchayat raj, here is a model UN Instrument to use as a model. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the Guidelines can be sabotaged by agencies that can interpret the Guidelines to suit appropriation for individual gains but it is the responsibility of coastal and inland communities to defend these rights to survival and for the larger society to realize that defending what the Guidelines propose is the best way to safeguard the survival of the planet.

**(Ms. Nalini Nayak can be contacted at SEWA- Kerala 51, Kuthiravattom Lane Trivnadrum 695001 0471.2476734, 09895077961)**

## India tops in South Asia's human trafficking

India has emerged as the top destination for human trafficking in South Asia, a top UN official has said. South Asia representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Cristina Albertine, said that a majority of the victims are from Bangladesh and Nepal.



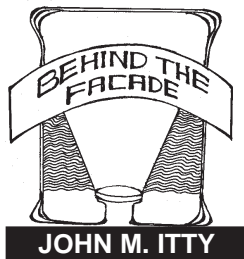
"India is a top destination for human trafficking in South Asia. People are trafficked from Nepal, the Gulf, Bangladesh and so on." Albertine told IANS in an interview at the UNODC office. Albertine said that there is no exact figure on human trafficking in India as only a few studies have been done. "Even within India, there are a lot of human trafficking victims. They stay within India. Not everybody is trafficked in Gulf state and across international border," she said.

As per the UNODC, hundreds of Bengali-speaking Muslim women are being trafficked from Bangladesh. "Usually what we use for South Asia is that every year at least 150,000 (0.15 million) people are trafficked across the international borders." Of the 150,000, Albertine said, 75 percent are women. "Fifty percent trafficking are done for forced labour," said Albertine.

Asked about the comparison of the continent with other ones, Albertine said: "It is very big region because one-sixth of the world's population lives here. It ranks quit high." Talking at the UN's India office here, Albertine informed that Nepal and Bangladesh are the source countries while India and Pakistan are source and destination for trafficking.

The UN official hails the effort by Non Government Organisations working to help the victims. "There are very, very good NGO's who are working on that issue.

"After the rescue, the victims need a safe place. Once they get a safe place, they need medical facility and psychological support. We also need the legal testimony of the survivors to submit the details of the traffickers to the court." "Repatriate them in their home country is another issue. There are so many NGO's who are doing excellent work, but it is not enough. The need is much, much bigger," she said. She said India has made some progress in tackling the human trafficking problem. "Bangladesh has made very good progress on taking care of human trafficking," she said. "India and Bangladesh are now working very closely on how to expedite and streamline the repatriation process of Bangladeshi survivors. For a long time nothing was happening on the issue. Now these things are slowly improving," she said. ●



In the previous pieces in this column, we exploded three myths about foreign capital: One; only a small portion of FDI in India is used for activities that help to improve the productive capacity of the economy, two; 42% of the 'foreign capital' is the laundered black money of Indian businessmen, and three; the laws that allow inflow of capital also allow reverse flow of capital with the consequent drain of the wealth of the country.

Instability to the economy created by portfolio investment is another issue, concealed by the media. Let us see this below:

Foreign investments are categorized into two: Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs), and Foreign Institutional Investments (FIIs). FDI refers to that investment used to acquire at least 10% of the ordinary shares or voting power in a public or private enterprise by non-resident investors. Those investments for 10% or less in a company are FIIs. While FDI seeks ownership and management of companies; FII is indented to buy securities, shares and debentures of companies for resale to make profit. Whereas FDI seeks a 'lasting interest' in the company; FII is used as parking funds to make quick profit. While FDI promises contribution to the productive capacity of the economy; FII promises dynamism in the capital market. But, in reality, both these promises are realized rarely. In fact, the concealed interest of the ruling class in welcoming FDI and FII is not availing of the

## Myths and Facts about Capital - 5

### Portfolio investment causes instability in the economy

benefits referred to above; but to make avail of foreign exchange to settle Current Accounts Deficits (CAD) caused by adverse balance of trade. (This intention is always concealed). One has to remember that whenever CAD becomes unmanageable, the government makes new announcements to welcome FDI in new areas of activities.

It is argued that FIIs will activate the money and capital markets, which in turn would boost development. But, experience shows that FIIs do more harm than good. Whereas in 1992-93, India received FIIs only to the tune of Rs.130 Million; in 2012-2013, this increased to Rs.168.3 billion. The number of registered FIIs operate in the country in 2014 is 1710. An aggregate net investment of Rs.7.08 trillion has been used in the share market by FIIs since they entered the Indian market in 1992. Developing countries are attractive destinations for FIIs. FIIs in 2014 control 75% of India's free-floating stock value at \$250 billion. In the first five months in 2009, ten developing countries yielded an average return of 37 to 72 per cent for the FIIs. India was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> that provided 48 per cent returns to FIIs. How FIIs make such a big profit? Definitely, by pauperizing small and medium investors who are lured to test their luck in the stock market. The more FII play game in the stock market, the more middle class people lose their savings.

Another problem with FIIs is that it is highly volatile. Money taken to a country by FIIs are

called parking funds. Because, they come in and go out quickly without any notice. For example, in March 2012, net FIIs in India was \$387 million. In April, this increased to \$926 million; and in May it came down to \$597 million. In June it came down to \$209 million. Because of such volatility, FIIs cause constant instability in the economy. It is the sudden departure of FIIs that created financial crisis in Latin America in 1980s and 1990s, in the South East Asia in 1997-98, in Russia in 1985 and in Argentina in 2001. The next may be India. Sudden departure of foreign capital leads to devaluation of the currency, inflation and unemployment.

Those who celebrate over inflow of FDI and FII, conceal the fact that much of these funds from abroad is composed of funds earned in India, taken to the offshore tax havens, and taken back to India from there. We have already found that 42% of the 'foreign capital' comes from Mauritius. Less than 10 per cent of FDI has come from EU countries, 7 per cent from the US, 5 per cent from the UK and 4 per cent from Japan.

All the five articles on this issue in this column, show how false is the propaganda about the magical power of foreign capital. Also that the concealed intention of our ruling class is to help the Indian businessmen to launder the black money they hoard abroad. How successful are the ruling class, the 'experts' and the media in deceiving the people!

(The writer wishes to record his profound thanks to the readers for their encouragement for the articles in this column for the last 12 years, and regrets his inability to continue this column owing to certain constraints.)

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## The Academy of Ecumenical Indian Theology and Church Administration

### Breaking structural inequalities: Organizing to resist injustice

The 25th (Silver Jubilee) Convocation of The Academy of Ecumenical Indian Theology and Church Administration was held at the Hindustan Bible Institute & College, Chennai on 2 Aug. 2014. In recognition of their contributions to Church/Society, the title of 'Doctor of Divinity' (*Honoris Causa*) was conferred on Ms. Praxedis Bouwman (World Association for Christian Communication & KALME, Netherlands), Mr. Sudipta Singh (Council of World Mission, Singapore), G. Ahmed Sharif (Lions International, Chennai), Ms. Asha Kowtal (General Secretary, AIDMAM of National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, New Delhi) and Mr. G. Mathew (Director, LEAD Forward India, Chengalpattu).



Dr. Julius Karunakaran, Dr. Shyam Prasad (Chancellor), Prof. P. Dayanandan, Prof. Luther Samuel and Ms. Asha Kowtal

Ms. Asha Kowtal delivered the Convocation address titled, "Breaking structural inequalities: Organizing to resist injustice"

Dr. Paul Gupta of the Hindustan Bible Institute & College released a book titled "Dalit Liberation-A New

Paradigm", edited by Rev. Dr. Samuel W. Meshack, containing contributions of Dr. K. Rajaratnam, one of the three founding members of the Academy.

The life and work of the five remarkable individuals honored by the Academy have brought

relief to tens of thousands of people and continue to inspire and invite others to serve people. The unpretentious service of the recipients and the realities of the people and fields they work with were reflected in the Convocation Address delivered by Ms. Asha Kowtal she said, "There is no peace without justice. Freedom for all of us is interlinked. None of us is free unless every victim of violence and discrimination is free; and that can happen only where all of us are engaged in building a just society and uphold justice and freedom."

Asha highlighted the realities of the violent nexus of caste and patriarchy again raising its head through consolidation of caste and communal forces. These forces are aided by the mindset of upper caste economic and media power. ●