

EDITORIAL

The radicals and the revolutionaries, the humanists and the religious followers of our time are becoming more and more aware of the blatant fact that the world we live in has yet to become human. The developing nations, the so-called Third World, are putting on a new awareness with regard to the world-situation and consequently are beginning to see the problem of development in a new perspective. Since religion is still a great working force in these nations, the role of religion in engendering and fostering this new awareness is of paramount importance.

At the same time, every nation, rich or poor, has to play their specific role in the remaking of the human situation. Man, irrespective of his name and nation, should be redeemed from the basic alienation he is subject to. Even religions, in their subtle deformations, can and do cover up these alienations. Hence the meaning of religion must ever be interpreted anew in the light of the living situations. Many a time religions appeared on earth as challenges to the distorted living situations. They can still be inspiring forces for millions all over the world, provided their authentic nature and original force is once again brought to light.

It is against this background that this number of **Journal of Dharma** takes up this burning problem of Religion and Human development for discussion. Dr. P.S. Jacob opens up the discussion reminding us of the need of change in religious thinking which he presents as a necessary condition for social change. "A process of change can only be invigorated by the collective aspect of individual commitment to development through organized and devoted activities, which finds its basis in the individual's system of belief". The article focuses its attention especially on the vital areas of revolution in Indian religious thought such as the social perception, attitude towards others, attitude towards oneself and attitude towards the future.

Religions which want to foster development has often been threatened by several other forces which promise greater and rapid development, but, rightly or wrongly, appear to be anti-religious. Dr. Sanjiwan Prasad sheds much light on this complex

question and carefully analyses the states of religion in a world of scientific progress and rational enlightenment, of secular thinking and of religious indifferentism.

Dr. R.R. Diwakar approaches the problem defining religion and development. Religion is theoretical and ritualistic and both these trends contribute to the enhancement of human existence. Development is to be understood as "the blossoming of the rich potentialities of a human being, consistent with the similar development of his fellowmen in a given community as well as humanity as a whole." However Diwakar's approach is very critical towards religion and reveals several instances where religion, which has been a source of inspiration and growth, has also been responsible for hampering the progress of humanity.

A new awareness about the world situation is transforming the Christian conscience of our time. A rapid and radical change of today's world system, much of which is seen as institutionalized form of violence, is called for as a necessary outcome of the prophetic vision and mission of Jesus. Dr. Vadakethala analyses the Christian call and shows that the core of Christian message is a revolution in the consciousness of man and demands the denunciation of all oppressive structures, religious, political and social, which do not tally with this revolutionary vision.

The structures of oppression are generally considered to be more in the developing nations than in the developed ones. But the developed nations have their problems too. Dr. Thomas Vellilamthadam, in his study based on Marcuse unveils to us the characteristic notes of the affluent society and describes them as "a class society with a high concentration on economic and political power... a society growing in the condition of accelerating waste, planned obsolescence and destruction." Whether affluence is for or against human development still remains a problem. This is especially so because of the dubious nature of affluence with regard to man's quest for transcendence.

In spite of all the problems of the present, man lives in the hope of a better future. Life is a process towards a nobler end. Professor Thomas Berry, with the theological and mystical insights so congenial to him, contemplates on the earth process and calls our attention for the future it is heading for. The process of the earth and its future dynamics he unveils is a harmonious blend of different forces, subhuman, human and super-human.

Finally in our survey section we present a study of the Hindu renaissance and the developmental movements in India. Dr. T.M. Manickam and T. Manninezhath, both of whom are closely associated with the Journal of Dharma, have made this survey very interesting and illuminating. The Indian vision is often interpreted to be passive or even negative in its attitude to matter. However, the survey shows how the Indian religious vision, in spite of its stress on the other worldly contained the seeds of development and time and again has inspired great men to launch programmes revolutionary for development and change in their social, political and even religious patterns of life.

With the chronicles presenting the reports of a multireligious panel discussion on "Values in a fast-changing World" and of a theological seminar on "Religious Pluralism and the Uniqueness of Christ" we conclude this number.

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