



INTRODUCTION

The Executive Committee of BTESSC has decided to have the World Council of Churches 10th Assembly theme “God of Life: Lead us to Justice and Peace” as the theme for the year 2013 in all our deliberations. As a “theme” is not merely a slogan or motto, it provides a focus for theological reflection, worship and meditation as well as for programmatic activities in the year. We are starting the deliberations with the Board Seminar on 7th Feb, 2013 in which Prof. Ninan Koshy, the former Executive Director of WCC is presenting a paper on the theme and that paper will be responded by Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad, the General Secretary of National Council of Churches in India and Dr. Lalrindiki, a faculty member of Aizwal Theological College. The main paper and the two responses are included in this study series.

BTESSC has already started to discuss on this theme last year itself when the theme for the National Theological Student Conference was held in May 2012, and the Lay Persons consultation in December 2012. Both the groups released statements on this theme from their perspective. We also organised a national level essay competition on this theme for students. As a theological community which is part of the global church, we need to reflect on this theme continuously since justice and peace are integral part of our daily life.

“This theme is a modification of an earlier phrasing: “Living Together in God’s Justice and Peace,” proposed by a Consultation of Asian theologians organised by the Korean Assembly Planning Committee (KAPC) for the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, in partnership with the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and WCC’s Asia Desk, in Seoul, Korea in November 2010. It wanted to emphasise the Asian capacities for crossing boundaries and building communities amidst diversity of religions, cultures and ethnicities and also to make a distinction from what is generally understood as life, justice and peace to what these ought to be as we reflect on them as Christians.”

“The theme of the assembly was inspired by the diversity of Asian contexts and by a growing sense of urgency to care for life and seek justice. It is both a prayer and a statement of faith, calling Christians to engage with God’s vision of justice and peace, so that all may have life in fullness.” Justice is the most outstanding aspiration of the people of Asia and justice is crucial for peace and sanctity of life.

Prof. Ninan says in his paper that, ‘Justice is the precondition for peace. Peace can be built only on the foundations of justice. The struggles for peace and justice are intertwined. The biggest challenge to economic justice is neo-liberal globalization. Justice has no place

in globalization conceptually. It has no space in globalization's scheme of things.' Finally, he challenges the church thus: 'As instruments of God's love and justice, we are called to give public and prophetic witness to a vision of a world that embodies not our worst fears but our best hopes. The church which is faithful to the prophetic Biblical vision can never allow itself to become trapped within the limits of what the dominant forces of any society insists as realistically possible. The church is theologically and morally obliged to challenge projects of imperial domination of nations and people. It is mandated to reject categorically theories of inevitability and permanence of war.'

'A vision of God's kingdom on earth is a vision of a community at peace because it is a community within which justice reigns. If the church loses that vision allowing that the prevailing order at any time is all that can be hoped for, it neglects an essential eschatological contribution to society.'

We recently celebrated Kanaka Jayanthi in Karnataka. Kanaka Dasa was a ballad-singer and a sage from the Chikmagalur region. Legend has it that Kanaka Dasa was turned away from the temple precincts by those committed to ritual purity and blinded to humanity. Even as the ballad-singer stood outside the temple walls, the ritual prayers continued within. The legend has it, and this we must celebrate, that the 'murti' turned itself. A turning away from the priests and pious and turns towards the ballad-singer, outside the temple walls. This is the perfect example of the God of life. A God who turns away from religious piety and ritual purity. A God who turns to the ones who are cast out and those who are outside the temple walls. The God Emmanuel who pitches God's tent among the Dalits, Adivasis, LGBT Community and all those who yearn for human identity, battling human forces.

This recognition leads to a consciousness. A consciousness that transforms the identities of the slave and the dispossessed. This identity transformation; towards an identity of being fully human, and in the image of the divine is an ongoing process. A process of being in a struggle for justice and peace. The very participation of struggling for justice and peace is a process of humanizing oneself. The theme of calling on God to lead us to justice and peace therefore is at the core of the Gospel. To be fully human and to be fully human is also to be Christ like.

The 'lead us to justice and peace' is a disturbing message. It forces us out of our comfort zones. It calls for risk-taking and to transcend ourselves, to go beyond boundaries. This message also comes with the assurance that we partner God in this process. For God is already the 'Lord of the dance,' destroying and recreating and refashioning a new world order. Fortunately we have models. Our models are the social movements. Movements which are in the forefront of several struggles in the country. Literally from Koodankulam

to Manipur. Be it Irom Sharmila, Ajay Sahu or Uday Kumar, women and men are resisting forces of death; be it the Indian Army or other ministries of the government and corporate interest. In their resistance lies their hope for a new world and in their struggle they are fashioning a new politic. Certainly a new governance. In this lies hope. Hope for all. In their struggle we recognize that the God of life is present in the world and fashioning a new heaven and new earth, calling us to join in the dance.

I use this opportunity to thank Prof. Ninan Koshy for his excellent paper and also thank Dr. Roger Gaikwad and Dr. Lalrindiki for their responses which they did with in a short time. We hope this study material will be useful to all our theological community.

P. Mohan Larbeer
Secretary

07.02.2013

GOD OF LIFE, LEAD US TO PEACE AND JUSTICE

Some Reflections on the WCC Assembly Theme

Ninan Koshy

When the tenth WCC Assembly meets in Busan, Korea, that will be the second time the Assembly is held in Asia. The Third Assembly was held in 1961 in New Delhi. That was a period of great expectations in Asia with a large number of newly-independent countries finding their place in the comity of nations. It was at that Assembly the churches from the Third world could raise their own voice in the ecumenical movement.

Themes of Assemblies

The theme of the tenth Assembly of the World Council of Churches meeting in Busan in October is “God of Life, Lead us to Justice and Peace.” This is a prayer. It is about leading us to justice and peace in the world, yes, in this world of injustice and war.

When we look at the themes of WCC Assemblies we find that they have been formulated in different ways. Some are affirmations and declarations of faith, some are prayers to God, some invoke the Holy Spirit and several are Christ-centred. The theme of the last Assembly held in 2006 in Porto Allegro, in Brazil was a prayer “God of Grace, Transform the World.”

Whatever be the form of the theme, it is not meant as a slogan. It is a key to theological reflection and to discernment. The themes are about what is happening in God’s world. The Inaugural Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Amsterdam 1948) had the theme “God’s Order and Man’s Disorder.” Amidst the complexity, unpredictability and ambiguity of international developments, what resources are available to a body like the WCC for acting in this realm? Certainly as the 1966 Geneva Conference on Church and Society pointed out, there is no set of universally valid rules or easy to apply abstract principles.

However,

Holy Scripture, Christian History, contemporary Christian experience and the insights of the social sciences and other secular disciplines do inform the situation, and in their light a Christian is called to be obedient to his understanding of God’s will in this particular situation.

The discernment by Christians of what is just and unjust, human and inhuman in the complexities of political and economic change is a discipline exercised in continual

dialogue with biblical resources, the mind of the church through history and today, and the best insights of social scientific analysis.¹

While justice and peace have been major concerns of the Assemblies from Amsterdam, Busan is the first Assembly to have the two combined as the theme.

Special Relevance for Korea

The theme is of great relevance to Asia as a whole. The Pentagon document on Strategic Guidance entitled 'Sustaining global Leadership, Priorities for 21st Century' released in January 2012 was announced that the USA would be massively shifting its military, political and diplomatic concentration to Asia-Pacific region. Known as the "Asia-Pacific Pivot" it is explained as "rebalancing." Generally considered to be a strategy to confront China, it is tantamount to the declaration of a cold war in Asia. While releasing the document, President Obama made it clear that he was determined to make America "even stronger in a manner that preserves American global leadership and maintain our military superiority," American *global leadership* is a fancy name for the Empire, admittedly maintained by military superiority.

The theme has a special significance for the Korean peninsula. This is a region which cries for peace and justice. Korea was divided at the end of the Second World War. The hostilities in the Korean War (1950-53), the first war during the Cold War period, came to an end with an armistice agreement. There is still no peace treaty and in international law North Korea and South Korea are in a state of war. The Korean Demilitarized Zone separates the two Koreas. This is a situation created by the Cold War but strangely continuing even more than two decades after the end of the Cold War. The shadow of a nuclear war has been in the peninsula for more than half a century.

The Korean Churches led a valiant struggle for democracy and human rights in the 1970s when the country was under dictatorship. They had to undergo a lot of suffering. They realized soon that justice in the region would be possible only with peace and reunification of Korea. The WCC had extended support to the Korean churches in their struggle for human rights. It was against this background that the WCC took the initiative for establishing contacts with the small Christian community in North Korea. This was a process the beginning of which was at a consultation in Tozanso, Japan in 1984 and is known as the Tozanso process.

The Tozanso Process

In November 1985 a colleague of mine in the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) and I visited North Korea at the invitation of Korean Christians

Federation and the North Korean government's committee on reunification matters. It was the first official visit by any church or ecumenical body to North Korea. For the first time we could meet representatives of the Christian community there. For the first time we could enter into discussions with the North Korean government on reunification and related issues.

Our contacts with Christians were limited to discussions with the Korean Christians Federation and worshipping in two house churches. It is important to note that this happened at a time when officially the government of North Korea still claimed there were no Christians or church groups there. The Indian Ambassador in Pyongyang Khiante Lalvunga, a Mizoram Christian whom we visited, was surprised to learn that there were Christians in North India and there had been house churches in Pyongyang. He had been told there were none. There were no church buildings in Pyongyang at that time.

The idea of a meeting of Christians from North and South, supported by the KCF was favourably received by North Korean government and we immediately followed up with the South Korean churches and government. These discussions paved the way for the first significant step in the process, a seminar on "The Biblical and Theological Foundations of Christian Concern for Peace." Glion I-Glion is in Switzerland – as the meeting came to be known, brought together for the first time representatives of churches from North and South in 1986. Glion II was held in 1988. The first church was built in Pyongyang soon after a visit of a CCIA delegation in 1987.

In July 1989 the WCC Central Committee meeting in Moscow, with representatives from North and South present – adopted a major policy declaration on peace and reunification of Korea.

The WCC confesses it has not always dealt equitably with the Korean situation. Mistakes of the past should weigh on the conscience of the ecumenical community and intensify the determination to struggle for peace and reunification of Korea.²

The declaration, the first of its kind by an international organization, said:

The Korean division is in microcosm a symbol of the division of the world. If this wound in the human community can be healed there would emanate from Korea a hope for all humanity. We pray that the cross of the Korean people can lead to an Easter for us all.

The immense tragedy of the division of Korea is still little known. The disproportionate human cost paid by the Korean people the Cold War and geopolitics is little known. The continuing agony of the millions of separated families is little known. The potential for escalation of the conflict and even to a nuclear conflagration is little known.³

The statement made more than twenty three years ago rings true even today. This is the Korea where the Assembly will be meeting.

One hopes that the Busan Assembly will make a discerning statement on peace and reunification of Korea, following up the 1989 Central Committee declaration.

The nuclear arms programme of the North Korean government is highlighted as one of the biggest threats to peace in the world. North Korea was one of the countries in the list of 'axis of evil' of former US President George W. Bush. It should not be forgotten that North Korea has been under nuclear threat from the USA for the last fifty years, a threat repeated as recently as in 2011 by the Defense Secretary Leon Panetta.⁴

There is widespread expectation that the Assembly will make a statement on the nuclear question taking into account new developments including the merging of the nuclear weapons and nuclear plants issues, the special significance for the Korean Peninsula and the need for a new theological discussion.

The Great Prophecy

The garden in the UN Headquarters in New York contains several sculptures and statues that have been donated by different countries. One is called, "Let us Beat Swords into Ploughshares". Presented in 1959, it is a gift from the then Soviet Union. Made by Eugeniv Vuchetich, the bronze statue represents the figure of a man holding a hammer on the one hand and a sword in the other. He is turning it into a ploughshare, symbolizing the desire of humankind to put an end to war and convert the means of destruction into creative stools for the benefit of all.

More famous and conspicuous than the Russian statue, is the wall against UN headquarters known as the Isaiah Wall. On it is written the well-known prophecy of the future of the fellowship of peace credited to Prophet Isaiah, though the same prophecy was made by Prophet Micah.

The Lord will mediate between nations and will settle international disputes. They will hammer their swords into ploughshares and turn spears into pruning hooks. Nation will no longer fight against nation and will train for war any longer (The New Living Translation Bible, 2007).

Redefinition of War and Peace

One major problem we encounter today is the redefinition of war and peace and the confusion of thought it has created. The confusion is created by the prevailing discourse on war and peace, a discourse reflecting the hegemonic definitional power of the USA.

Claiming 'victory' in the war against Iraq, while speaking to the workers of the Boeing factory, President declared, "We are defining war on our own terms".⁵ The terms of the new definition of war and therefore of peace are determined by the USA. This was clear when Bush added, "The manufacturers of weapons are the peacemakers."

The confusion was evident in President Obama's speech accepting the Nobel Peace Prize. He had just dispatched additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan. As the President of the USA he was leading two of the biggest wars in history. Naturally when he was accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, he was in a dilemma. He said in his speech. 'There will be times when nations will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justifiable.'⁶ Claims about necessity and moral justification of any war are problematic, especially when such claims are made by the rulers who wage seemingly endless wars. The distance from the necessity of war to the inevitability of war is considerably shortened by new military doctrines and strategies.

Obama added in his Oslo speech, "Yes, the instruments of war have a role in preserving peace". This uncomfortably reminds one of President Bush's speech at the Boeing factory where he hailed the workers there as peacemakers. This is contrary to the understanding of weapons of war in the vision of peace that the prophets gave us. "Convert swords into ploughshares" has become the charter of the secular movement echoing the words of the prophets of the old. But the new prophets are telling us that swords are ploughshares and there is no need for conversion. The prophets of the old were speaking not just about a mechanical or technical conversion. It was about the conversion of minds, conversion from a war culture to a peace culture. The leaders of the world are telling us today that what we need is a permanent war culture.

War is presented as necessary, inevitable and permanent. If war is inevitable then peace is indispensable. If war is permanent peace has no space. War is normal, peace is abnormal, seems to be the claim. It is through war that freedom is ensured, we are told. We are even told that it is through war that democracy is built as in Iraq. In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Obama spoke of the biggest and strongest military alliance in the world, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which has an aggressive strategic doctrine. "Peace requires responsibility. Peace entails sacrifice. That is why NATO continues to be indispensable."⁷ Rejecting a host of available methods and avenues for conflict resolution, military force is presented as the only method.

The Empire

The use of the word "empire" in relation to American power was once controversial, more or less restricted to the left-wing critiques of the USA. But within a short period after the new century started, in the academic circles and in the mainstream media,

America began to be called an empire. “The military victory in Iraq seems to have confirmed a new world order,” wrote Joseph Nye, Dean of Harvard’s Kennedy School of government, in the *Washington Post* (May 25, 2003). “Not since Rome has one nation loomed so large above the others. Indeed the word ‘empire’ has come out of the closet.” Respected scholars and analysts on both the left and the right are now referring to the “American Empire” approvingly as the dominant narrative of the twenty-first century.

The Empire formulated and put into action the new military doctrines and strategies. Beyond seeking decisive victory, war aims at the decisive defeat of the adversaries. The official documents ambitiously defined war in terms of “changing the regime of an adversary state,” and “occupying foreign territory until US objectives are met.” The USA claims that it has the right under pre-emption to launch a war against any state that may in its perception eventually become a threat to it. This is a dubious claim the “right” to intervene militarily in any country at any time and wage preventative war. These doctrines and their practice made have made America’s wars in this century imperial wars.

These doctrines and wars waged on their basis raise a number of questions for the churches demanding reformulations of theological positions, especially in view of Christian religion being used in the defence and justification of the Empire. The Report of the Church of England Bishops speaks of the moral righteousness claimed by the American Empire and calls for a critique of imperialism:

What distinguishes it from many other empires in history is its strong sense of righteousness. The sense of moral righteousness is fed by the major influence of the Christian right on the present US policy. This has a very worrying political aspect in the way in which Christian millennialism has been taken up by so many evangelical Christians with its apocalyptic overtones and its very clear political agenda in the Middle East. We argue that not only is the political reading of current history in the light of apocalyptic texts illegitimate but these texts need to be read in a different way altogether, as a critique of imperialism rather than as justification of a particular form of it,⁸ the Bishops said.

The time has come for the World Council of Churches to name the Empire and critique it.

Just Peace?

The discussion of peace in the World Council of Churches is reflected in the document *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace* and the Message from the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation held in Kingston, Jamaica, in May 2011.⁹ A scrutiny of the term *just*

peace, which has become the mantra of the WCC, is necessary especially in the light of the imperial redefinition of peace and resultant confusion, we mentioned earlier. President Bush addressing the graduating class of the Military Academy of West Point on June 1, 2002, at a time when preparations were in full swing for the military attack on Iraq, said, “We fight as we always fight for a *just peace* – a peace that favours liberty” (emphasis added). President Obama accepting the Nobel Peace Prize said, “It will require us to think in new ways about the notion of just war and an imperative of *just peace* (emphasis added).” The basic question is whether the term *just peace* brings out fully or even adequately the biblical understanding of peace. In our opinion it does not. ‘Just Peace’ is a term in what may be called the imperial lexicon.

One hopes that the Assembly will clarify the issue and make a formulation that takes justice and peace as indivisible as the Bible teaches us.

The Hague Secret Emissary Affair

The Korean people have known for more than a century that peace is defined by imperial powers and that conquest and occupation are peace for them. On June 15, 1907 the Hague (Netherlands) was scheduled to host the Second Peace Conference, an international gathering where diplomats from countries large and small were supposed to discuss how to keep the peace and make wars less likely.

When King Gojong of Korea, under Japanese occupation learned about the conference, he realised that this venue should be the right place for making diplomatic efforts for the cause of Korean independence. He decided to send secretly three emissaries to present the case of Korea and to denounce the treaties Japan had imposed on Korea. For the mission the King chose three diplomats – Yi Sang-sol, Yi Chun and Yi Wi-chong who had modern education and proficiency in foreign languages. They arrived in the Hague just before the conference. The French text of documents criticizing Japanese action in Korea was sent to all forty delegations attending the conference. Some newspapers published their views but the Korean emissaries were denied admission to the conference. The delegations of major countries there refused to meet them. Despite the high-sounding words like ‘international law’ and ‘world peace,’ it was clear that the Western countries as well as Russia and Japan were determined to maintain and promote their colonial interests. They defined peace as legitimizing conquest, occupation and annexation. The diplomatic move by the Koreans was rebuffed and the diplomats from that country were humiliated. One of them Yi Chun died in the Hague, broken by the collapse of their hopes, the frustration and the stress of hard work. Through this unfortunate affair known as the “Hague Secret Emissary Affair,” the Koreans learned that war and peace are defined in imperial terms with a view to legitimizing conquest and occupation.¹⁰

The word peace is used less and less in international affairs. It is security that is claimed to be achieved, or sought in Afghanistan and Iraq, not peace. In current parlance security has become the substitute for peace. The meaning of security itself has become restricted and no longer means securing the economic, social and cultural rights of the people. The doctrine of national security has narrowed down to the security of the state or rather that of the regime and that in terms of military security only. There is a concept of legitimate national security, but the current doctrines of national security lead to massive weaponization, militarization and possession of nuclear weapons. They are recipe for conflicts and wars.

The Assembly should be an occasion for the churches to seek the true meaning of security defined primarily in terms of people's security.

The Vancouver Assembly

The Sixth Assembly of the WCC (Vancouver 1983) made a significant statement on Peace and Justice which received considerable attention within and outside the churches.

Busan should be the occasion for a new comprehensive statement on the topic, responding to the challenges of the times.

The Vancouver Assembly succeeded in combining the concerns of peace and justice in a remarkable way. Rather than giving primacy to peace over justice, the attempt has been to emphasize that justice is the root of peace.

Peace cannot be built on foundations of injustice. Peace requires a new international order based on justice for and within all nations, and respect for the God-given humanity and dignity of every person. Peace is, as the Prophet Isaiah has taught us, the effect of righteousness.

The statement underlined that commitment to justice and peace is a mandate to churches. That commitment becomes a matter of faith. *The Biblical vision of peace with justice for all, of wholeness of unity of all God's people, is not one of several options for the followers of Christ. It is an imperative of our time.*¹¹

The Path of Justice

Justice is the precondition for peace. Peace can be built only on the foundations of justice. The struggles for peace and justice are intertwined. The biggest challenge to economic justice is neo-liberal globalization. Justice has no place in globalization conceptually. It has no space in globalization's scheme of things. Globalization is a development model which emphasizes only growth. The other dimensions of development, identified by the

ecumenical movement, viz. distributive justice and people's participation are absent in globalization.

Free market and free trade are hailed as the solution for all economic problems. Globalization is worship of the free market. Already some seventeen years ago, The Bishop Leslie Newbiggin in an address in 1995 to an Assembly of the World Association of Reformed Churches (WARC) had warned, "If the free market reigns, if the free market is worshipped as god and if there is no power other than free market, there will be growing polarization between the rich and the poor."

Global trade in the name of free market is unfair and leads to injustice. The New York Times editorially wrote:

*By rigging the global trade game against farmers in developing nations, Europe, the United States and Japan are essentially kicking the development ladder out from under some of the world's most desperate people. This is morally depraved. America's actions are harvesting poverty around the world.*¹² The editorial was analyzing the reasons for the conflict in Southern Philippines.

The global financial crisis has exposed the fundamental flaws in the capitalist system. In addition to the question of justice, or rather related to it, this raises many moral issues. Archbishop Rowan Williams in an article in the Spectator under the title, *Face it, Marx was Partly Right about Capitalism* underlined the moral issue in the crisis.

*Behind all this is the deeper social issue. We find ourselves talking about capital or the market almost as if they were individuals with purposes and strengths making choices, deliberating reasonably about how to achieve them. We lose sight of the fact that they are things we make. Ascribing independent reality to what you have in fact made yourselves is a perfect definition of what the Jewish Christian scriptures call idolatry. What the present anxieties and disasters should be teaching us is to keep ourselves away from idols in the Biblical sense,*¹³ the Archbishop wrote.

The Assembly should take a stand against neo-liberal globalization that produces injustice, inequality and marginalization and also deal with the moral issues that are being raised.

India has followed the economic model under globalization from the 1990s. India can claim an impressive growth in the recent past, though it is declining in the context of the global financial crisis. The benefits of the growth have gone largely to a small minority. You can find several Indians now in the list of the richest people in the world. Yet the Indian Prime Minister claims "inclusive growth." His claims are repudiated by authoritative studies inside and outside the country.

The 2011 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme, *Sustainability Equity: A Better Future for All*, said India has the largest number of multi-dimensionally poor in the world - 612 million. The UNDP calculates poverty on a multi-dimensional vector such as access to health services, clean water, cooking fuels, basic household goods and home construction standards. Which means over half of India's population is abysmally poor.

India has also slipped down in the Human Development Index (HDI) ranking. India has come down from its 2010 ranking of 119 [out of 169 countries to 134 (out of 187)] in 2011. The global HDI ranks countries in their progress on the three key dimensions of human development: education, health and income. The report points out that inequality in the distribution of human development is more pronounced in India than elsewhere. The gap between the rich and the poor is wider in India than in Bangladesh.

"Economic life is one of the chief areas where we live out our faith, love out neighbour, confront temptation, fulfil God's creative designs and achieve our holiness," the US Catholic Bishops' Conference of the USA said in a Pastoral Letter in 1986, highly relevant even today. It said:

Every economic decision and institution must be judged in the light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person... The justice that was the sign of God's covenant with Israel was measured by how the poor and the unprotected – the widow, the orphan and the stranger – were treated. As followers of Christ we are challenged to make a fundamental 'option for the poor' – to speak for the voiceless, to defend the defenceless, to assess policies and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor.¹⁴

There are those who argue that justice can be ensured only after growth. They seem to suggest that justice is a by-product of growth. It is not. It is generally claimed that it should be growth with justice. But Psalm 23 gives the most helpful clue in this matter. It is the path of justice we have to seek. Projects of growth are not necessarily amenable to distributive justice. In fact certain types of growth produce injustice. So each economic decision has to be judged, whether it is in the path of justice, whether its results facilitate distributive justice.

The Assembly will be helping the churches considerably, if it reiterates the ecumenical understanding of development as growth, distributive justice and people's participation.

Walking in the Name of the Lord, our God

We go back here to the prophecy (prophecies?) of Isaiah and Micah. Both prophesied in the same words. Who was the first and original author? The question is very difficult, because Isaiah and Micah were contemporaries living in the same small region of Judah.

An interesting interpretation of this is given by the famous Dutch theologian Hendrikus Berkhof.¹⁵ Berkhof says, that to him the most likely explanation seems to be that both prophets quoted a third one, whose name did not need to be mentioned, because at that time his prediction was very popular. This man differed widely from the two unpopular doomsday prophets. They lived in times when it was thought that wars were inevitable; wars were like natural phenomena like floods. People probably confronted Isaiah and Micah with the prediction of the third, the prophet of peace. Do you not believe that wars will come to an end?

They responded by incorporating this wonderful vision into their prophecies of doom. *We also believe that wars will come to an end. We also share that longing for peace.* They assured the people that God himself shares it. But after employing the same words of prophecy, they added some words of their own as if they were laying down some conditions. Isaiah added: *O, House of Jacob, come let us walk in the light of the Lord.* And Micah added: *All the peoples walk each in the name of its god; but we will walk in the name of our Lord, God, for and ever.*

In a way we are living in times similar to those of the prophets. We are told that war is necessary, war is inevitable. There is talk of permanent war. The mightiest nation on earth has declared a war, which we are told will continue for a long time to come. That nation has amassed the most powerful military force in all history, redefined war and fashioned doctrines and strategies that will make wars inevitable. In the context of Asia it has declared that it will maintain global leadership i.e. the empire, by military superiority.

In highlighting the obstacles to peace, Micah goes to the heart of the matter. All the people walk each in the name of its god. Walk in the name of god means they trust it, they are inspired by it in their actions, they obey it. These gods are class ideologies, narrow nationalism, neo-liberalism, free market, imperial security, national security, nuclear power, counter-terrorism etc. All these are gods of war and their shape is militarism. They delude us with peace as the ultimate goal but they demand for the present trust in war and violence. Does the prophet Micah acquiesce in this seemingly hopeless situation? The second part of his addition reads: *But we will walk in the name of our Lord our God for ever and ever.* This is the path through which we are led to peace and justice. This is our contribution to the future of humankind – to walk in the name of Jesus as the key to the ultimate and victorious purpose of God. As Berkhof says, *We are called (negatively) to a radical mistrust in the gods of the Empire and (positively) to a conspiracy of fundamental trust in a God who paid such a price to invest his love in his rebellious creation.*¹⁶

As instruments of God's love and justice, we are called to give public and prophetic witness to a vision of a world that embodies not our worst fears but our best hopes. The

church which is faithful to the prophetic biblical vision can never allow itself to become trapped within the limits of what the dominant forces of any society insists as realistically possible. The church is theologically and morally obliged to challenge projects of imperial domination of nations and people. It is mandated to reject categorically theories of inevitability and permanence of war.

A vision of God's kingdom on earth is a vision of a community at peace because it is a community within which justice reigns. If the church loses that vision allowing that the prevailing order at any time is all that can be hoped for, it neglects an essential eschatological contribution to society.

It is when we walk in the name of the Lord, our God, that we are led to justice and peace.

¹ World Conference on Church and Society, *Official Report*, 1967, WCC, Geneva, p.111.

² Minutes of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, Moscow 1989.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Cone Halliman, Playing with Fire in Korea, *Dispatches from the Edge*, November 8.

⁵ US Military Muscle 'Redefining' War: Bush, *Toronto Star*, April 17, 2003.

⁶ President Accepting Nobel Peace Prize, *White House Documents*, December 10, 2009.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ "Countering Terrorism, Power, Violence and Democracy", A Report by a Working Group of the Church of England's House of Bishops, September 2005.

⁹ "An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace and Message of the International Ecumenical Convocation", Available from WCC website www.oikoumene.org.

¹⁰ Andrei Lankov, 1907 and Dashing Korean Hopes, *The Korea Times*, December 27. 2008.

¹¹ Statements of the Vancouver Assembly, *CCIA Background Information 1983/1984*, WCC, Geneva.

¹² The Rigged Trade Game, *New York Times*, July 20, 2003.

¹³ Archbishop Rowan Williams, Face It, Marx was Partly Right About Capitalism, 14. *The Spectator*, 24 December, 2008.

¹⁴ Economic Justice for All, Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and US Economy, *US Catholic Bishops*, 1986.

¹⁵ Hendrikus Berkhof, "We will Walk in the Name of the Lord, our God", Before It's Too Late, The Challenge of Nuclear Disarmament, Paul Abrecht and Ninan Koshy (ed), WCC, Geneva, 1982.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

GOD OF LIFE, LEAD US TO PEACE AND JUSTICE

Some Reflections on the WCC Assembly Theme

by Prof. Ninan Koshy

A Response

I feel extremely honored and privileged to be given this opportunity to respond to a paper presented by eminent theologian and church leader like Prof. Ninan Koshy. However, I also know that due to my lack of experiences in the wider socio-political life of the country as well as in the ecumenical world I will not be able to do proper justice in my response. But since I am entrusted with this important responsibility let me try to respond as best as I can.

Through the paper, Prof. Ninan Koshy is sharing with us his reflections based on the theme “God of Life, Lead us to Peace and Justice” of the coming tenth WCC Assembly which is going to meet in Busan, S. Korea in October 2013. He has pointed out two important factors in which the theme on Peace and Justice has special relevance in the context of Korea. One is the reunification movement of North and South Korea which is understood as an important means for ushering in peace and justice in the region. The other factor is the escalating nuclear threats under the nuclear arms programme of the North Korean government in response to the ongoing nuclear threats from the US government. It is obvious that there can be no peace and justice unless nuclear threats are removed from the region.

The division of Korea into two separate countries is indeed a tragic moment which had torn apart communities and families causing untold miseries and sufferings for decades. It is a violation of the rights of communities who want to live together peacefully and with dignity. The same agony is also experienced by various communities in different parts of the world and the desire to be reunited as one community has become a powerful tool for mobilizing people to struggle against divisive policies imposed by insensitive and self-centered decision makers. Reunification is also one of the important agenda taken up by different ethnic movements in Northeast India whose close-knit tribal communities had been shattered by international and state boundaries imposed by the State. Let us hope that the Busan Assembly can help in promoting the aspiration of the Koreans to be united as one people.

At the same time reunification without addressing structures and policies which deprive one section of the people from the other group can also ended up in creating a much more unequal community even if people are of the same ethnic origin. In the multi-ethnic context of Northeast India the movement for reunification can also lead to the resurgence of cultural chauvinism which often victimize other smaller and more marginalized communities who are also living in the same geographical area. Therefore, the movement for reunification need to be firmly rooted in the commitment for promoting peace and justice for all.

The threat to nuclear warfare in the Korean peninsula is a serious concern and churches do need to make a strong stand against this kind of threat. Since nuclear plants and the production of nuclear weapons are interlinked, the movement against nuclear warfare in the peninsula need to be linked up with movements against nuclear plants in different parts of the world, including India, Japan and other countries. The threats of nuclear warfare cannot be separated from the ecological destruction caused by nuclear wastes which are both potentially destructive for the survival of God's good creation, including the survival of human beings.

While talking about the need for putting an end to warfare based on biblical texts, Prof. Ninan Koshy rightly pointed out that one should not be misled by the prevailing discourse on war and peace where war is portrayed as the only means for achieving peace in the world. It is true that this kind of distortion is promoted by modern day Empire, the USA, but there are also many cultures which glorify war. Historically patriarchal cultures in different parts of the world and under different circumstances had attained their glory and power through violence and warfare. It seems that in our modern world the arrogant ways in which the US is instigating and promoting war in different parts of the world has become effective mechanism for triggering off the underlying patriarchal violence present in many societies and cultures. In this kind of circumstances I agree with the paper presenter that not only the weapons of war but the whole violent patriarchal culture itself need to be transformed and converted into a peace culture. The biblical promise of 'turning swords into ploughshares' may also be interpreted not only as the attempts to do away with war technology but also as the invention and development of eco-friendly technologies. This is necessary for utilizing natural resources in the most responsible and accountable manner since it is the destruction of life sustaining resources with the help of western science and technology which is now creating situations for war in our today's world.

Prof. Ninan Koshy also mentioned that the right wing Christians in the US with their strong sense of righteousness (which may be understood as self-righteousness) are influencing their political leaders in waging wars against other nations. In this situation it is crucial for the churches to formulate theological discourse which takes a strong position against imperialism since the Bible never sided with imperialistic and oppressive leaders. In other parts of the world it is the right wing section of the dominant religious groups, such as the Hindutva forces in India, who justify and legitimize the use of violence against people of other faiths inside and outside the country. This shows that religious people and their institutions need to have critical self-analysis and an openness to examine the kind of faith that they uphold and how they use their religious influence and scriptures in promoting their political interests. This concern can also be taken up in the inter-faith dialogue which has become an important ministry in ecumenical bodies. As pointed out by the paper presenter maybe it is also time for ecumenical bodies like the WCC to name

the Empire, which is to a large extent, depending on the goodwill of rich, powerful and influential right wing Christians for its survival and to critique its imperialistic policies. Naming evil forces, policies and structures can have liberating effect and help the churches to be more authentic and true to its commitment to the Gospel of Christ.

The substitution of the term 'Peace' by 'Security' in international affairs, as pointed out by the paper presenter is another factor which creates confusion in making relevant response to conflict situations. Perhaps the confusion is mainly to do with the narrowing down of the term 'security' to the security of the state and only in terms of military security which is far removed from securing the economic, social and cultural rights of the people. However, the attempt to distort the understanding of the term 'security' recently suffered a severe blow in India as the general public rose in anger against the State mechanism who has utterly failed to uphold people's safety and security.

The need for people's security, particularly security for women in public places, has become a decisive factor in mobilizing the Indian public in the wake of the brutal gang rape of a paramedical student in Delhi on 16th December, 2012. Let us hope that the protests and the ongoing debates on security for women will lead to a greater awareness of women's rights and to see women as equal citizens and no longer as objects of glorification, keepers of honour and bound in traditional roles. Rape is a manifestation of the continued existence of structures of patriarchy, caste and class not only in public spheres but also very much in the families and in grass root level communities. Real security for the people, particularly for vulnerable sections like women, children, the poor, Dalits, tribals, adivasis and others, cannot be achieved without challenging insensitive and unequal structures and institutions within our own society. It is also important to remember that in many cases physical security cannot be achieved without secure and sustainable livelihoods. Churches need to be aware of the deeper and wider understanding of security without which real peace cannot be secured.

Another requisite for peace is justice but peace and justice cannot be achieved under the process of neo-liberal globalization. Actually the promotion of war culture, increasing violence against women and other vulnerable sections and the ecology is the outcome of aggressive imposition of neo-liberal capitalist economy in different parts of the world. It appears as if these market forces are invincible and that there is no alternative way of organizing human community, especially our economic life. In the midst of the engulfing despair and feeling of helplessness Prof. Ninan Koshy highlights the fragility of the market forces which are, after all, only created by human beings themselves. Therefore, human beings can resist and even change the very nature of capitalist market economy if they really want to.

However, it is important to remember that economic institutions, including the present day neo-liberal market economy, are products of powerful structures, institutions and ideologies which follow their own logic. It may not be possible to resist, let alone change, these market forces only at the level of morality. Structural change through transformation of the existing structures and ideologies which uphold and promote capitalist economic system need to be achieved. This can take place only through sustained struggles against neo-liberal globalization at all levels and in joining the search for alternative ways of organizing human community which promotes peace and justice for all.

Even though the process of neo-liberal globalization seems to focus mainly on the economic sphere, it is using and thereby aggravate traditional enmities and unjust practices and structures to secure its interest, such as patriarchy, caste, ethnicity and class in different parts of the world. If churches are seriously taking a stand against neo-liberal globalization it is important for them to discern how unjust practices and structures are interconnected with one another. This kind of discernment can help in unmasking and denouncing evil forces and structures which are perpetuating injustice, inequality and marginalization.

The positive note of ending the paper by calling the church not to give up its hope grounded in God's love and justice is comforting and inspiring. The church do need to constantly affirm the vision of God's reign on earth which is a vision of a community where peace and justice prevail in order to become a beacon to all who are in despair and suffering. But this hope needs to be translated into concrete action to show the authenticity and possibility of inaugurating God's reign here on earth. The church can do this by constantly re-examining its theological stand and its practices as well as by joining non-violent peoples' movements for the promotion of peace and justice in various aspects of life and among different kinds of people.

The concerns raised by Prof. Ninan Koshy are quite similar with the concerns of theological education under the Senate of Serampore College. It has been affirmed that one of the objectives of theological education is to develop values of the "reign of God" and enhance the "New Creation" witness (with special reference to Justice, Peace and Integrity of all Creation) in society.¹ Thus, this paper provides valuable insights for achieving the goal of theological education in India and in other parts of the world as well. It is a fitting and appropriate resource as we are in the midst of deliberating over the development and contribution of our theological education for social transformation.

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¹ *Regulations and Syllabus related to the Degree of Bachelor of Divinity*, West Bengal: Senate of Serampore College, 2010, 15

A Few Reflections on Some Reflections of Prof. Ninan Koshy on the WCC Assembly Theme GOD OF LIFE, LEAD US TO PEACE AND JUSTICE

Challenges of the Asian Context since Last WCC Assembly in Asia

Prof. Ninan Koshy: *When the tenth WCC Assembly meets in Busan, Korea, that will be the second time the Assembly is held in Asia. The Third Assembly was held in 1961 in New Delhi. That was a period of great expectations in Asia with a large number of newly-independent countries finding their place in the comity of nations. It was at that Assembly the churches from the Third world could raise their own voice in the ecumenical movement.*

Yes it is after 52 years that the WCC Assembly meets again in Asia. The concerns of peace and justice are very much alive in our region. Indeed 52 years after the New Delhi WCC Assembly, in the Asian context poverty, patriarchy, and plurality (religio-ethnic-cultural-political) continue to be the contextual challenges of Asia. India has a fourth challenge, namely caste. While churches in Asia have become more and more vocal, and are playing an important role in the ecumenical movement, they are still struggling to responsibly address the concerns of poverty, patriarchy, plurality and caste. Hence the prayer, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace!” is very urgent.

The 1960s were times of great expectations in Asia, particularly as newly independent countries were asserting their place in the world. Along with their independence they then so labeled “under-developed” countries of the times were dreaming of being “developed,” following the paradigm set for them by the First world.

“The eight best performers -- Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia -- grew at an average of over 5.5% per year in per capita terms between 1965 and 1990. . . . But as remarkable as was the growth performance of these eight core economies, not all Asian developing countries were able to follow their lead. South Asia, the Philippines, Burma, Central Asia, and many of the Pacific Island nations all recorded average or below average growth in comparison with developing countries in other regions of the world.”¹

From the 1990s India too opened up its economy to the globalization paradigm, and while there is much hype about ‘Shining’ and ‘Emerging’ India, the ground reality is that poverty in its different forms still stalks the majority of the people, as Prof. Ninan Koshy articulates:

1 Steven Radelet et al, “Economic Growth in Asia,” <http://www.cid.harvard.edu/archive/hiid/papers/ecgasia.pdf> (downloaded on 13.01.13)

The 2011 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme, Sustainability Equity: A Better Future for All, said India has the largest number of multi-dimensionally poor in the world - 612 million. The UNDP calculates poverty on a multi-dimensional vector such as access to health services, clean water, cooking fuels, basic household goods and home construction standards. Which means over half of India's population is abysmally poor.

Globalization is a development model which emphasizes only growth. The other dimensions of development, identified by the ecumenical movement, viz. distributive justice and people's participation are absent in globalization.

When Mammon becomes God and the Market becomes the Temple, only the rich have temple-entry capability rights! As Prof. Ninan Koshy has advocated, *"The Assembly should take a stand against neo-liberal globalization that produces injustice, inequality and marginalization and also deal with the moral issues that are being raised."*

Systems and cultures of patriarchy² pervade Asian countries in general. Writing on "India: Patriarchy rules the mind" in August 2012, Praful Bidwai observes,

[I]t is precisely a lack of liberal and egalitarian attitudes towards gender issues that explains the machismo that drives sexual violence against women. What we are witnessing here are new forms of male aggression in a social context marked by a recent explosion of consumerism and hedonism, itself linked to India's "fast-track" high-GDP capitalism, rapid urbanisation, and growing acceptance of swagger, raucousness and testosterone-driven competition among young men for female attention as normal through Dabangg mannerisms, Mumbai-style tapori lingo, and loud, boastful cell phone conversations.

The National Crime Records Bureau statistics show that between 1953 and 2011, the incidence of rape rose by 873%, or three times faster than all cognisable crimes put

2 "Patriarchy is based on a system of power relations which are hierarchical and unequal where men control women's production, reproduction and sexuality. It imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society which strengthen the iniquitous power relations between men and women. Patriarchy is not a constant and gender relations which are dynamic and complex have changed over the periods of history. The nature of control and subjugation of women varies from one society to the other as it differs due to the differences in class, caste, religion, region, ethnicity and the socio-cultural practices. Thus in the context of India, brahminical patriarchy, tribal patriarchy and dalit patriarchy are different from each other. Patriarchy within a particular caste or class also differs in terms of their religious and regional variations. Similarly subordination of women in developed countries is different from what it is in developing countries. While subordination of women may differ in terms of its nature, certain characteristics such as control over women's sexuality and her reproductive power cuts across class, caste, ethnicity, religions and regions and is common to all patriarchies. This control has developed historically and is institutionalized and legitimized by several ideologies, social practices and institutions such as family, religion, caste, education, media, law, state and society.." says Suranjita Ray in "Understanding Patriarchy", http://www.du.ac.in/fileadmin/DU/Academics/course_material/hrge_06.pdf (downloaded on 13.01.13)

together, and three-and-a-half times faster than murder. In India, a woman is raped every 22 minutes, and a bride is burnt for dowry every 58 minutes. Last year, 42,968 cases of molestation of women were registered. The number of crimes against women, including sexual harassment, cruelty by the husband or his relatives, kidnapping or abduction, and human trafficking, exceeds 2,61,000.³

There is an urgent need of cultivating a new mind-set and culture in place of patriarchy!

Asia being the home of several religious and cultural traditions has posed a challenge for peaceful living. While Christianity is the predominant faith in five Asian countries namely Armenia (98.7%), East Timor/Timor Leste (98%), Philippines (90.5%), Georgia (90.5%) and Cyprus (79%), in most Asian countries Christians are a minority.⁴ Edmund Chia, former Executive Secretary of the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, observes:

As far as Christianity in Asia is concerned it was also only within the last fifty or sixty years that the issue of religious pluralism began appearing on its radar screen in a prominent way. This is because the 500-year history of Christianity in Asia was actually not so much a history of Asian Christianity but that of Western Christianity as played out on Asian soil. The issues of concern to Christians in Asia therefore were that of their mother-Church in Europe. To be sure, it held on to so much of the characteristics of its mother-Churches that local churches in Asia were like little English, Dutch, French, Portuguese, or Spanish churches. One could even say that churches in Asia were "colonies" of European churches. It comes as no surprise then that Asians in general looked upon Christianity as a foreign religion.⁵

When religion and politics are blended together, then problems of fundamentalism and communalism abound. It is in such a context that Christian mission becomes a challenge. Hope S. Antoine remarks,

One major obstacle to building communities of peace in Asia is the narrow type of mission orientation which is so entrenched in the minds of Asian Christians. This mission orientation is clearly manifested in the zealous efforts of Asian Christians today to go into the world to share the gospel, which is but equated with Christianizing other Asians. This is really proselytism, often confused with conversion, and which has become a bad word in Asia especially for Asians of other faiths. Although often understood as the task of sharing the good news (evangelism), upon closer analysis, proselytism springs from

3 <http://www.sacw.net/article2766.html> (downloaded on 13.01.13)

4 Armenia has 32,56,113 Christians out of a population of 32,99,000; Timor Leste has 19, 86,601 out of 11,08,777; Philippines has 8,38,76,714 out of 9,26,81,453; Georgia has 4,107,850 out of 4,636,400; and Cyprus has 628,535 out of 792,604. South Korea has 14,375,990 out of 49,232,844 (29.2%). Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Asia

5 Edmund Chia, Asian Theology of Religious Pluralism, http://www.asianchristianreview.org/acr_pdf/acr_pdf_0102_08chia.pdf (downloaded on 13.01.13)

a desire for self-propagation, usually of a particular church or denomination. There are new congregations, usually with financial support from outside, that avidly promote this type of mission. Unfortunately, this mission orientation renders the church and Christianity as a whole suspect in the eyes of many people of other faiths.⁶

We need to relate Jesus the Light of the World (1961 WCC theme) to the prayerful and responsible commitment to justice and peace in a pluralistic world (related to the 2013 theme).

A fourth evil confronting Indian society in particular is caste. K. Prabhakar Rao, a retired army colonel, and a Hindu, admits:

Hindu society is plagued by the ills of caste system and of late, this problem has taken the proportions of Goliath and is threatening the very integrity of the nation. The society in India is rather divided on the basis of caste and not a single day passes without an incident where caste becomes the focal point. Recently in Maharashtra State a Dalit family of four was done to death by the upper caste Hindus and there was big riot and arson in the State. Similar incidents also take place in other State from time to time. Trains were burnt, shops were looted and life came to stand still. A caste war is a regular phenomenon in Bihar and Jharkhand States. . . The extreme end of caste problem is the case of untouchability ...⁷

In a judgement given by a Supreme Court bench of Justices Dalveer Bhandari and A K Patnaik, when they convicted upper caste Thakurs in 2009 (thirty-eight years after they had massacred 8 dalits!) it was stated, "It is absolutely imperative to abolish the caste system as expeditiously as possible for smooth functioning of rule of law and democracy in our country."⁸ However the evil of caste continues to permeate every sphere of society be it education, employment, marriage, elections, right to property, health care etc.

Hence the urgency of the prayer, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace!" The WCC Assembly should imperatively address these concerns of poverty, patriarchy, plurality and caste from the perspectives and struggles of the Asian peoples.

The Significance of the Prayer for Korea

This Assembly prayer theme also has much significance for Korea since the WCC Assembly is going to be held in the country. Prof. Ninan Koshy draws attention to the concern for the reunification of Korea referring to a 23 year old WCC declaration:

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- 6 Hope S. Antone , Editorial in Special Edition of CTC Bulletin on "Holistic Mission in the Context of Asian Plurality", http://www.cca.org.hk/resource/ctc/ctc08-12/00_editorial.pdf (downloaded on 13.01.13)
 - 7 K. Prabhakar Rao, "The Evil Of Caste In Hindu Society" <http://www.sanghparivar.org/blog/dr-k-prabhakar-rao/the-evil-of-caste-system-in-hindu-society> (downloaded on 13.01.13)
 - 8 Indian Express, New Delhi, Sat Dec 05 2009, 16:54 hrs, <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/abolish-caste-system-sc-gives-lifer-to-6-for-dalit-killings/550392/> (downloaded on 13.01.13)

In July 1989 the WCC Central Committee meeting in Moscow, with representatives from North and South present – adopted a major policy declaration on peace and reunification of Korea.

The declaration, the first of its kind by an international organization, said:

The Korean division is in microcosm a symbol of the division of the world. If this wound in the human community can be healed there would emanate from Korea a hope for all humanity. We pray that the cross of the Korean people can lead to an Easter for us all.

The immense tragedy of the division of Korea is still little known. The disproportionate human cost paid by the Korean people the Cold War and geopolitics is little known. The continuing agony of the millions of separated families is little known. The potential for escalation of the conflict and even to a nuclear conflagration is little known.

We find instances of such wounds of division all over the globe. Political boundaries have divided people within countries and between countries. Another relatively recent phenomenon which is related to this division is that of refugees and migrants who are compelled due to different reasons to move from one geopolitical space to another and then comes their struggle for livelihood, dignity, and justice. There are even instances of stateless people being subject to injustice and the struggle for survival in some countries. Even in South Korea itself we need to address the plight of the new Minjung: the migrants and irregular workers.

Jamie Doucette and Robert Prey in their article, “Between Migrant and Minjung: The Changing Face of Migrant Cultural Activism in Korea” state:

By the late 1980s, Korea had shifted towards becoming a migrant-receiving country. The migrant worker population in South Korea has since increased rapidly. As of February 2009, there were 854,000 registered foreigners in South Korea, or about 1.8% of the population; in addition, there are an estimated 200,000 undocumented workers, roughly one quarter of the total number of migrant workers in the country. Thus migrant workers are beginning to make up a significant proportion of the working population, and the struggles they experience are not unlike the struggles of past workers’ movements.

The music of *Stop Crackdown*, a bad name for a very good band that was formed in December 2003 by migrant workers from Nepal, Burma, and Indonesia, is one example. The music has elements of Korean prog-rock . . . reminiscent of some of the camptown rock music popular in the late 1970s. In particular, their single ‘Payday’ highlights the plight of foreign migrant workers in Korea with lyrics that are eerily reminiscent of Kim Min Gi’s ‘Light of a Factory.’ In that play, upon having their wages withheld, the mistreated women workers sing, “Money for our backbreaking work... Money that Never Comes.” In *Stop Crackdown’s* ‘Payday’ video, migrants facing similar conditions belt out a chorus that concludes with the line “Oh Boss, give me my pay.”⁹

9 <http://japanfocus.org/-Robert-Prey/3323>(downloaded on 13.01.13)

Defining Justice and Peace

While we earnestly say the prayer, “God of Life, lead us to peace and justice!” we need to be careful, as Prof. Ninan Koshy cautions us, as to whose and what definitions of justice and peace we are using. It is the manufacturers of weapons of mass destruction who claim the right of policing the world, in particular the Empire (USA), who are asserting: “We need weapons to bring in peace!” While they have rights to continue to use nuclear arms, and while they can continue to do research on chemical weapons and other hi-tech ways of waging war, other nations whom they suspect (of threatening their supremacy and/or of questioning the justness of their decrees) are prohibited from engaging in such exercises. And so their “wars on terrorism,” their wars to ensure ‘security’ and the “collateral damages” their exercises involve are all justified in the name of ‘just peace.’

In the name of security and for the purpose of policing peace, a beautiful natural place like Jeju Island in Korea, one of the 7 Wonders of Nature, is being slowly transformed into an army base. The project seems motivated by the United States’ urge to encircle China with its Aegis anti-ballistic system -- something China has called a dangerous provocation -- and by the South Korean navy’s construction of a massive naval base for aircraft carriers, submarines and destroyers to carry Aegis. Hundreds of acres of fertile farmland have already been bulldozed to prepare for concrete, and caissons (large watertight chambers) would extend this dead zone into the sea. Imagine dropping fifty-seven cement caissons, each one the size of a four-story house, on miles of beach and soft coral reefs. It would destroy the marine ecosystem. Similarly in the name of development thousands of acres of land in Orissa are being offered to a Korean company POSCO which will cause irreparable damage to humans, their native land and their livelihood and to the Mahanadi river and the coastline.

Related to the concern of just peace is the issue of the contribution of nuclear for eco-friendly and eco-enhancing development. As Prof. Ninan Koshy has stated, *“There is widespread expectation that the Assembly will make a statement on the nuclear question taking into account new developments including the merging of the nuclear weapons and nuclear plants issues, the special significance for the Korean Peninsula and the need for a new theological discussion.”*

Since for us ‘just peace’ has its foundations in the Creator-Savior/Liberator-Fulfiller God, any definitions of just peace should have reference to the righteousness and fecundity of the ‘reign’ or of the *shekinah* of God.

Roger Gaikwad