COMMUNITY EDUCATION OF FAITH THROUGH NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

by

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COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION OF FAITH

(Adult Catechesis)
WITHIN AND THROUGH NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Fr. D.S. Amalorpavadass

Introduction: Rationale of this Topic

Today many of us discuss about the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) and wish that the Church should enter into this new field of non-formal education, and do some pioneering service. That in itself is a service which the Church can and should render as part of her mission, not only as salvation of men, but also as full humanization and integral development of men, transformation of society, and re-orientation of the whole temporal order towards its goal. In rendering this service we should be honest and dedicated, identify ourselves with the programme, appreciate the values and goals set, follow the procedure laid down by competent authorities, make use of the means proposed and enter into the processes of realising the objectives and play the role that devolves on the educator, especially the non-formal educator.

Our specific concern is different though it is the continuation of the same theme. We ask ourselves whether, while carrying out faithfully the programme of non-formal education, especially with regard to adult literacy, we can also fulfil a catechetical task or include within it a programme of educating the faith of an adult community. In short can we catechise the people whom we serve as non-formal educators in NAEP?

Our answer is a definite 'Yes'. While so stating we do not intend violating the processes of adult education nor substituting new religious goals for the temporal ones set by the sponsors of the programme. We mean that it is possible to bring in a dimension of faith, and help people to live according to Christian faith in the process of facilitating their

integral human development through adult literacy programme which itself is wider in perspective and objective than mere realisation of literacy.

In order to assure a practical guidance in this regard, may I be permitted

1) to recall the salient features of the current catechetical approach and pedagogy

2) to emphasise the need for adult catechesis or community education of faith in total environment

3) to describe what we mean by 'formal catechesis', 'informal catechesis' and 'non-formal catechesis'

4) to underline the difference between the process of non-formal adult catechesis

5) to outline the content, aim, process and scope of non-formal education from that of formal education

6) to indicate the milieus and levels, agents and communities that can assure its own adult catechesis/or community education of faith

7) to project a new image and style of the non-formal educator

8) to show how the faith dimension and education can be achieved through depth, transcendence and universality

9) to spell out what is/should be specifically Christian in non-formal education.

I. SALIENT FEATURES OF
THE PRESENT CATECHETICAL APPROACH:

A. Catechetical Ministry:

Our whole life and entire human history—past, present and future—can be and is the milieu and sign of revelation. God is in the world through creation and through the incarnation of His Son; this creation and the humanity of Jesus are the media of his presence in the world. These two realities are prolonged through our life and history. Due to this, the whole of human reality is charged with God's presence. God is in the world and history and in our large

human community. The world and human community are the bearers of God's presence and designs. He reveals and gives himself to us and saves us through the events and situations of our life and history. The Church or the community of Christians forming the Body of the Word incarnate becomes the universal Sacrament of Revelation and Salvation. Thus God's presence and Christ's mystery are co-extensive with the world and history.

Our ministry is to discern God's presence in our life and history, interpret his designs for our life and to help others to make the same discovery by interpreting their life-situations by the Word of God.

B. Human/experiential/incarnational approach:

At the last All-India Meeting we had a good discussion and clear articulation of the new approach in catechesis. Let me briefly recall it. We start from the experience of the group. We focus on man, and the community and situate them in their environment. We identify ourselves with this experience and interiorize it by reflection and sharing. We find its meaning at the human level. Then we proceed to discover the still deeper meaning of it in the light of faith. This leads the group to a discovery of God and an understanding of his plan for us and others. This culminates in the surrender of ourselves to God and his plan. In that process we undergo a personal conversion; we also bring about an impact upon the community by our commitment to the transformation of the society. This is the dynamic process of the new approach which we call human approach/incarnational approach.

C. Universal Dimension of Catechesis:

Such a Catechesis or this Religious Pedagogy or the ministry of interpretation is a continuous and life-long process. Since revelation and faith are themselves a life-long process, a progressive revelation of God's mystery implies a gradual discovery of it by man. God reveals himself continuously and everywhere; we must be ready to respond to him in faith continuously and everywhere.

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If revelation-faith is thus a full-time process and a day-long affair, and if God's presence and saving action is to be found in everything, catechesis must extend to every minute, to every event, to every aspect of life, to every age-group, nay, to the whole span of one's life. All of us need catechesis in one form or other and always. Catechesis acquires thereby a universal dimension.

II. NECESSITY OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION OF FAITH IN THE TOTAL LIFE ENVIRONMENT:

A. An Integrated Pedagogy in Educational Institutions:

Even the Catechesis in a school or a parish cannot be a subject by the side of and among the other subjects, separately or jointly. It cannot be compartmentalised. The reflection in faith which is Catechesis should gather and use the material/data of all the subjects of the curriculum, decipher and clarify them, evaluate and interpret them in the light of the Gospel, underline all the values involved (human, religious and Christian) and enable the students to live them personally and in society.

B. This supposes many factors:

1) There should be a competent person as a Catechist or religion teacher. He/she should not only be well-versed in catechetics but should have some knowledge of all the subjects covered by a curriculum, capable of happy relationship with others and working with his/her colleagues with other teachers/lecturers. He should be able to coordinate the whole teaching and yet be unassuming without threatening to dominate the other teachers.

2) This calls for all-round team work in the whole school/college, and among all the staff members, educators and administrators of the institutions. They should be familiar with and convinced of inter-disciplinary approach to all the questions and topics of study.

3) All should be aware, especially the Catechist that the various subjects taught refer to man, deal with his existence, evoke his human experience individually and socially.

4) The faith-educator should be able to gather all the data covered by various subjects with reference to particular life-themes or faith themes, select them, correlate them, make a synthesis by leading the group to analyse the data, to reflect on them on the human level and faith level and to find deeper Christian meaning and answer.

5) The overall atmosphere in the educational institution, in the family and in the neighbourhood should be conducive, converging and thereby become supportive of the effort made for an integral approach in assuring all-round faith awareness and our life of faith.

C. Catechesis as a comprehensive reflection of life in faith in the total life milieu:

Even a good catechesis cannot be limited to school or formal catechetical sessions. It must extend to one's whole life-milieu and one's sum total of activities. It must constitute a comprehensive reflection of life in faith. In other words, the institutional/parochial education of faith should be related to and situated within a wider context of one's total life in the wider community and environment of society. This education of faith in one's total life-environment supposes not only a person-to person catechesis but also a collective catechesis in the whole environment. This is done by the faith atmosphere created and maintained in neighbourhood, by the life witness of adult Christians individually and as groups, and by the formal initiation to faith by the entire faith-community (Catechesis). This is what is meant by "adult catechesis", or community education, (informal and non-formal education in faith). Otherwise a classroom and individual catechesis oriented towards children and/or youth alone can be neutralised by the environmental influence of the society or negated by the community and institutions which embody un-christian values, or it can remain a compartment or pigeon-hole in the whole gamut of ones life and society.

This implies a coordination among a) formal catechesis; b) liturgy and prayer; c) school education; d) lay apostolate training; e) life at home and society; f) the impact of the gospel on social, professional and political life, and g) the social means of communications.

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To conclude, a real and effective catechesis for the rising generation is therefore not one that is organised for and addressed to children and youth outside the normal life milieu but one that is situated in and integrated within the faith-life of the whole adult Christian community, in its ordinary life-setting, in family, social and work milieu, with dynamic interaction of adult society. That is why we should not only involve the whole Christian community (in a parish or diocese) in the education of its faith, but also renew and foster Children's Catechesis and Youth Catechesis by the medium and process of Adult Catechesis in the wider community of a village or an urban neighbourhood.

D. Social means of communication and AV Media:

Such a community education in faith calls for the language of social means of communications. The means that inform, educate and orientate the human community should also be the means of enlightening us in faith. We need a new language of vision, audition and feeling. Mass media or social means of communication are of a different kind from the group media/mini media or audio-visual aids.

III. FORMAL, INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION:

We have three types of education: formal, informal and non-formal. For the sake of clarity, it is good to keep in mind these three words. We need a common language if we want to be clear and understand one another. Let us keep this distinction for the sake of clarity.

A. Formal Catechesis:

Whether we follow the experiential approach (inductive method) of the present as described above or the doctrinal approach (deductive method) of the past, both are formal education.

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"Formal" means that we follow a format and that an education has a specific form. It is systematic and structured, pre-determined and imparted through a set formula. This type of education is normally imparted in institutions, and so it is also called 'institutional' catechesis. It supposes an organisation and set-up for example of a school or a parish or an association; so it is called 'organised' catechesis. Every formal catechesis is not only institutional but also and to some extent, 'regular' because of the certain periodicity and regularity in the faith formation process. That periodicity may be daily, weekly, monthly or yearly. **It is thus a formal, systematic, institutional, organised and regular education.** What we have been doing during these past decades was to assure this formal catechesis in our schools, parishes and colleges. Our present syllabus and text books are good examples of formal catechesis, though very much renewed in keeping with the new approach.

B.   Informal Catechesis:

There are some colleges and schools where formal education is no more possible; or it is possible but not adequate. So in recent years—during the last 10 years or so, we have had recourse to what is called **informal** means of education. It takes place outside a certain framework of an institution and through other means than a formal catechesis.

(1)   **Relevant and flexible liturgy** would be, for example, a good case of informal catechesis. Our current discussion as to how we shall make use of the liturgy of the Word on Sundays in order to give adult catechesis is connected with this approach. Liturgy by its nature is worship and not catechesis, even though it has a catechetical dimension. Yet we are trying to make the maximum use of it for imparting catechesis to the adult community.

(2)   **Prayer groups or group prayer** would be another informal means of catechesis.

(3)   **Indian forms of prayer** like Bhajans and Namjaps, Yoga and Dhyana or various forms of Hindu/Buddhist Meditation can become informal means. Some people may not be interested in a formal catechism class, but will readily attend a prayer session or meditation.

(4) **Samdhya** (sunrise, midday and sunset meditation) may be appealing to others.

(5) **Home-based small group reflections** and family prayer sessions can become family catechesis. We may not call it catechesis in the traditional sense. As the format is not determined there is room for flexibility and it lends itself to a variety of ways.

(6) In recent years we have developed also **forms of meditation** like nature-meditation, object-meditation, picture-meditation, painting-meditation and photo-meditation.

(7) **Newspaper meditation:** People easily read newspapers. They are interested in the current affairs. It becomes catechetical when the faith-dimension is integrated into it. We have a christian reading of the newspapers. It is holding the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. It is the dialectics between the Word of God in the privileged form of Biblical revelation and the Word of God as actual and on-going revelation, taking place in our history and lives and reported by the newspaper.

(8) Today some are attracted by **charismatic renewal and prayer.** This is not only a valid form of prayer but also can be an effective means of adult catechesis and renewal in the Spirit.

(9) **Retreats,** especially youth retreats.

(10) Youth **missions** and parish missions could be other forms of faith education as informal catechesis.

(11) **Student counselling and guidance etc.** may well be informal means.

(12) **Various associations** for children, youth and adults, various **lay apostolate movements.**

(13) Study circles

(14) Campus ministry

(15) Camps and work projects.

We can make use of these and many other informal means for the deepening of faith. If we cannot have formal catechesis we can make use of informal means of catechesis, though the one is not exclusive of the other. But informal catechesis becomes necessary especially when we cannot have a formal catechesis.

C. Non-formal Education:

Non-formal education is simply all that formal education is not. It starts from the group and its specific needs as felt by the group. It is practical and pragmatic as it is learnt by doing and it is acquired while engaged in one's work, profession and milieu, while solving problems of life, while formal education culminates in an academic degree or certificate, most of the time unfit and useless for any employment. Non-formal education enables a person to improve his work, his ability and skills, and orientate towards his humanization and all-round development. It is aimed at self-reliance, spontaneity, creativity, and productivity.

With regard to non-formal catechesis, the group is enabled to see God in its life, to discover in faith God's message for it and to commit itself to live that aspect of life according to that faith commitment.

God is present in man and in every human reality, in the world and in all realities of the temporal order. The discernment of God's presence in these realities and faith response to him in our life by collaborating with Him for the fulfilment of His plan is a life of faith, a Christian existence. The educational process which facilitates this life of faith is what is called today, the existential approach or human approach. This human/incarnational approach becomes more evident in what is called 'non-formal education'.

In the formal catechesis of a classroom-setting we are isolating an experience of a group in order to go deeper into it and to have a faith-interpretation of it, whereas non-formal education takes **the total reality of the human experience of the community,** and discovers faith dimension in it.

IV. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PROCESSES OF NON-FORMAL AND FORMAL EDUCATION:

The dynamics and the procedure in this form of education are totally different from those of formal education. Here we start from reality and from our lived experience of reality as and when we live it. We do not know the reality until and unless we change it. We cannot change the reality

until we are involved in it and are identified with it, unless we live it in depth and reflect on it and transform it. Now, this reality is complex, dynamic and ever-changing. We cannot understand a changing reality unless we ourselves change. We cannot influence the dynamics of reality unless on the one hand we are carried in this dynamics and on the other we give meaning and direction to the process of change in the dynamic reality. Man makes history and becomes master of it when he gives meaning, assures a purposeful orientation, and channels and guides the process of change. Since reality is complex, it cannot be known unless it is analysed and interpreted by tools of various sciences. This analysis and reflection can be supplied by various sciences: human sciences and also theological sciences. Making use of all the sciences in an approach of inter-disciplinarity, we facilitate their interaction and convergence.

V. THE CONTEXT, AIM, PROCESS AND SCOPE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND ADULT CATECHESIS:

(1) Non-formal faith—education should be situated in the context of our ever increasing awareness of the vital necessity of adult education, the all-round and all-out effort made for ushering in social justice and the shift of emphasis realised from child and school-centred education to adult and community-centred environmental education (and catechesis).

(2) The aim and process of non-formal adult catechesis is to enable a group of adult Christians to become aware of themselves and of their life-situation, (the locus), to become involved in it by a committed action in common, to enter into a process that will lead people to a more human development and to the building up of communities at all levels and to reach thereby human maturity and adulthood, and attain the community's common goals of total liberation and integral human development.

(3) The educative process is not merely one of academic teaching and acquisition of abstract knowledge from without, but a genuine concrete knowledge of the reality acquired by involvement and committed action, and by personal

and group discovery from within the reality. It is neither a mere reflection in a vacuum outside the reality, nor a mere involvement and action without reflection but an action-re-flection-in-faith process. The pedagogy makes the group involved, participative and creative.

(4) Groups: This education is/should be directed not simply towards small groups, or an elite, the privileged classes, but towards the masses, for the benefit of larger human groups.

(5) In this process adult Christians should play their specific role as Christians by sharing the Christian vision of realities, by giving a Christian meaning to life-situations and events in the light of the Gospel (Christian interpretation), by offering Christian inspiration, motivation and orientation to committed action and to the historic process, and by living their Christian commitment to the achievement of their goals taking risks in a spirit of selfless and humble service.

Thereby they will bear witness to Christ risen from the dead and become Lord of the universe. Thereby they will also contribute to the renewal of man and society and for the final fulfilment of human history and creation of a fully just and human society which will emerge as the Kingdom of God.

VI. THE MILIEUS AND LEVELS, AGENTS AND COMMUNITIES THAT CAN ASSURE ADULT CATECHESIS

Now non-formal education has to be done at different levels e.g. the family and the parish. It could also be in terms of districts and Centres as the government has envisaged it. The level of every project has to be determined by the group of educators taking into account the local situation. A project can also be small, limited to a town or a slum.

Some of the areas or levels where adult catechesis has to be imparted in the context of wider human community are:

(1) The family: Interpersonal relationship in love between husband-wife, parents-children, wider relationships,

Christian atmosphere and witness of faith, Christian initiation of their children, family prayers and gatherings, parents as educators and catechists.

(2) In the parish, the Local Church: through the liturgy, devotions and festivals, missions and retreats, various ministries in the Christian community as a whole in neighbourhood groups, in the wider human community, in the interactions of the socio-economic-cultural reality of the parish

(3) The Institutions: Contribution of Services for Adult Catechesis by education, medical, health, cultural, social and other institutions. One needs to identify these various services both regular and extension services, by constant evaluation and by fixing priorities among them.

(4) Adult Catechesis through various lay apostolate movements: Regular evaluation of their contribution in terms of practice of faith, maturity of witness, and Christian vision, with possible re-orientations in terms of goals and organisation, vision and inspiration.

(5) Adult Catechesis in dialogue with and openness to the larger human community of the neighbourhood in a town or village, in the context of participating in building a better society; religious dialogue, action-programmes of development and community building, participating in civic and political life with critical use of mass media.

An important characteristic of non-formal education is that we do it with the whole community, which means with people of all religions, of no religions and of all ideologies. As we take the entire community at the level at which we work we should collaborate with people of all religions and persuasions. Within this wide ambient and universal dimension of deep inter-religious dialogue of life, we bring in a Christian contribution with Christian motivation.

Thus all these levels should contribute to and converge towards community education and adult catechesis. The Christians with their pastors, in this context and process should offer a Christian leadership of animation and coordination to make of everything a Christian reflection in faith, a prophetic interpretation and a Christian life-witness.

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VII. THE IMAGE AND STYLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATOR:

Here we come to a new type of educator/catechist. It is no more the individual teacher/catechist who matters but the community/the group involved. For the subject of reflection, the subject of involvement, the subject of transformation and the subject of faith-interpretation is not the individual educator but the whole community. They will do it not only for half-an-hour when they are isolated from the reality of their experiences and withdrawn from it. They will be doing it 24 hours of the day as they go from one reality to another and as they are involved and live in each of them in the light of faith.

Now, the animator which the catechist is, helps the process; he inspires, guides, orientates, stimulates and challenges, in such a way that the group is awakened to its faith and becomes capable of faith-response and faith-life. In this process he will be journeying with the group, but not in passivity and indifference, but in dynamic solidarity and interaction, playing his/her specific role: inspiring, and challenging the group from within the process of life. So the whole life of the catechist should be evaluated in terms of his identification with the community and of his ability to animate the community. One has to be, and one has to function all along from within the group.

In this style of Catechesis, the people are participants and decision-makers as they will be enabled to be involved in the project of their life from the very beginning. They will not be object of development, teaching and liberation. They will always be respected as persons; they will be facilitated to establish and intensify relationships, to build up community, to face the problems as a group, and to solve them also as a group. Thus the 'poor' become the evangelisers and catechists of their own community.

Even though we are following more and more a non-directive approach, we have still a long way to go to get this new reflex. The non-directive approach and group work become indispensable in the process of non-formal education.

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Some feel that the whole project could be a failure and in fact the NAEP has been a failure in many places. It is because the officials and even voluntary agencies are used to the directive approach, to making people objects of our action, and to filling in their minds with concepts through what is called 'banking method' of education. Thus most of us could be unfit for non-formal education.

If this is the danger for us, specialists and technicians who are well aware of the danger, one can well imagine the danger for government officials and other voluntary agencies who are not initiated to the new approach and educational process.

The Government-sponsored National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) supposes this new educational approach and calls for new educators. That is why there is a big gap between the government policy which includes all that we have stated above so well, and what is done by executives of this programme who do not have this spirit and vision, attitude and approach. What they do may be a programme of literacy or a teaching of skills; but it cannot be considered an education in the sense that we understand.

If we do not have this ability/reflex, we need to undergo a training for this purpose. Such a seminar/course/formation should enable Christian Educators of adults:

1) to learn the new educative process by which a group of adults can be made
   —to be aware of themselves, others and the social reality,

   —to reflect on concrete facts, happenings and problems of their immediate and distant environments.

2) to become promoters of personal maturity and builders of community
   —by bringing about openness and initiative
   —by creating an atmosphere of confidence and freedom
   —by encouraging spontaneous and free expression
   —by involving people in decision-making and personal participation

       —by fostering their interpersonal relationships and
       —by challenging them to creativity and originality and
       —to be prophetic in society and in the Church.

3) and for this purpose
    —to liberate themselves from their paternalistic attitude of a teacher who knows and
    —to identify themselves with adults as persons (sensitivity training) and
    —with milieus of life realising how the latter exerts pressures for an unchristian living.

4) to acquire the ethos of our times integrated with a Christian World Vision
    —to raise questions on the trends and values, patterns and structures of actual socio-economic development in the community.
    —to realise the need for social change
    —to involve themselves in concrete action for development and change
    —all that in the light of God's Word and as a consequence of their Christian vision and commitment.

5) to acquire a variety of tools, skills and techniques for doing so in various groups and situations

6) to develop a new reflex of working as a team
    —with people of various faiths, competences, fields and experiences
    —in a genuine spirit of collaboration and genuine universality

7) to evolve thus new models of education and Religious Education.

VIII. FAITH DIMENSION AND EDUCATION
ACHIEVED THROUGH

DEPTH, UNIVERSALITY AND TRANSCENDENCE:

In the process of analysis and reflection, interiorization and personalization, discovery and interpretation, faith dimension and faith education are assumed by leading the group to deeper transcendence and universality.

In non-formal education, in formal and non-formal catechesis the reality of our reflection and interpretation is the same; life-experiences. But faith dimension always implies going deeper as we believe that our God is a **'hidden God'** and is at the core of every reality. But due to this awareness of God's presence in history through creation and incarnation, we are able to go to a certain **depth** and arrive at a discovery of the ultimate and fuller meaning of our life in faith. So the deeper we go the more meaning we find. For Christ is the revelation of the depth of God's mystery and embodiment of the depth of man's mystery.

Secondly, faith dimension and interpretation of reality of our life demand that we **transcend** it and go beyond it. We need to transcend it because, even though God is present in reality, he is not limited to the reality. Every sign is lesser than the reality. Therefore taking our human experience seriously as bearers of God's presence and yet going beyond it is the challenge of faith and is the guarantee that our Christian life and faith-education include awareness of the mystery of God's transcendence.

Thirdly, we should **universalise** our experience, by relating our particular experiences with our other experiences and with the experiences of others today and yesterday. During a faith reflection and education we may limit ourselves to one particular experience for the sake of depth and relevance. But out of this experience we should move out, go beyond it and embrace the total reality, the totality of human experiences. Therefore we have to relate such and such human experience of ours with all experiences of others. So day after day, the progressive on-going revelation of God

becomes an object of our concrete and lived experience. Depth, transcendence and universality are the dimensions which we need to focus on as Christians ensuring faith-education.

IX. WHAT IS SPECIFICALLY CHRISTIAN IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION:

If all are participating in non-formal education, and if the Christians should work with the people of all religions and ideologies then what is the specifically Christian dimension in non-formal education? What is that makes us Christians? Let us suppose that a Marxist, a Hindu, a Muslim and a Christian follow faithfully the government policies and implement its programme. What is the specific Christian contribution that is made by the Christians? What will make of it an adult education of faith, in addition to the implementation of the national adult education programme?

1) **Christ:** The originality of Christianity is Christ. Christ is present everywhere and he is Lord of heaven and earth, whether we are aware of it or not. But when I say Christ I mean also the community in which Christ is present. Hence an awareness of Christ's saving presence and a personal and living faith in him transform our work.

2) **Christian inspiration and motivation:** Those who are working in the project should have a specifically Christian inspiration and motivation in addition to other motivations.

Even though one of the motives of the Christians may be to implement the national adult education programme, this is not their only motive, nor is it the only source from which they get their inspiration.

3) **Christian experience and christian dynamism for christian sharing:** Basically it is the christian experience, the transforming encounter with the Risen Lord that is the source of their dynamism to go out of the community and in service of others. All that we do springs spontaneously from basic christian experience which generates a christian dynamism, a new power to go out and share it with other people.

4) **Christian spirit, vision and values:** We take for granted that all promoters of non-formal education live by some human values and inspire the people to live according to them. Likewise, we take for granted that all the religious values are built into the programme and that we encourage people to communicate, share and live these religious values. We should also bring to them a christian spirit, a christian vision of reality and a specifically christian scale of values. The temporal order will be fulfilled only when the spirit of Jesus Christ and values of the gospel permeate all its realities, transform them, and re-orientate them.

5) **Christian interpretation and orientation:** Every project has a meaning and a purpose. As Vatican II clearly states the temporal order and human history do not depend upon the religious reality. They have meaning, goal, orientation and an autonomy of their own. That goal, of course, is God. Working from within the temporal order, the educators have to give a christian interpretation to the various realities and to assure a christian orientation to the process of building a new society, a society of justice.

6) **Christian involvement and commitment:** The genuineness and seriousness of it will be shown in the personal conversion of those engaged in these projects. Besides the personal conversion of those who are working in the project, there should also be a transformation of society, and concretely in the communities where they are animators and educators.

7) **Christian transcendence and universality: Christian future and hope:** Even taking for granted that the present implementation of the project is a failure and that in practice participation is refused to christian agencies, we can still do something all the same. A christian hope can be ignited in the midst of hopelessness. For even in what fails, and precisely because there is a failure we need to bring in christian hope. While frustration is to feel that everything is closed, hope means that there is something beyond and hence one can and should move towards it. Without being bogged down by any failure we can always move forward. This is transcendence. So in all our functioning we should breathe out hope and we should give expression to the possibility of a future. There is a future because we have hope. There is hope because there is a future.

8) **Christian emphases:** All that will become possible only in an authentic christian spirituality of self-emptying (**Kenosis** or **sunya**) in a pilgrimage (**yatra** or **pascha**), with openness and expectation, with certainty of hope we grope towards the ultimate goal which is fulness (poornam or **Pleroma**). This whole movement should be lived under the action and guidance of the Spirit of Christ.

APPENDIX I

Non-formal education is
An Education for Justice & Liberation,
for Development & Humanisation of the Masses

India has about 400 million illiterates, more than half the illiterates in the world. After 30 years of independence, 60% of India's population is still illiterate. And yet the Government spends annually Rs. 25,000 million on Education. Of the total education budget primary education receives only 25%, secondary and university education 60% and adult education less than 1%. All decisions are made always by the elite in favour of the elite. Education is not planned for the masses, in view of the poor and the underprivileged.

From this it is obvious that education in India is part and parcel of the unjust and oppressive system of the social mechanism. Rightly therefore has Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan stated in his foreword to the Tarkunde Committee's Report: that "the present system of education has failed to promote individual growth and has become more of a hindrance than a help to bring about an egalitarian transformation of society. If anything, the present system has merely confirmed the status quo and perpetuated the gap between the majority who are poor and uneducated and the minority who are privileged and have a vested interest in the establishment." Elsewhere he continues. "The experience of the past 30 years has shown that the State in India shall represent by and large, the haves and the upper and middle class and that the representatives of the weaker sections play only a minimum role therein." Further in India we have depended almost entirely on the State to bring about this transformation and the results have been far from happy.

This helps us to evaluate the systems advocated by Nehru and by Gandhi. While Nehru thought that education and culture should percolate from the top to bottom, from the

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lite to the Masses, the educational system tended to become elitist and widened the gap between the classes and the masses. Whereas Mahatma Gandhi pleaded for basic education of the masses, an education that will meet their basic needs and help them for their work and occupation, including manual work.

This shows that the education system should be so radically changed as to make it an education for development and liberation. Secondly education should be changed from being elitist to mass-oriented. Thirdly, we should not depend upon the State to bring about this change as it is class aligned. It is the masses and the masses alone that can bring about the change. For this the masses should be educated and enabled to exert mass pressure on the system and the power that be. What is required is popular involvement in view of mass movement. It also calls for the association of voluntary agencies on a large scale, in the implementation of the programme.

It is against this background that we should see the wider perspective and the whole gamut of the programme content. It is more than mere literacy: "Because learning, working and living are inseparable and only acquire a meaning when co-related, the activities to be undertaken under NAEP should be related to the needs of the learners and their self-reliant development." Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan in his foreword sums up the all-round objectives of 'non-formal adult education' as follows:

"Pursuit of simultaneous and complementary programmes of social and educational reforms, shifting of the emphasis from teaching to learning with the involvement of the entire community in the educational process, collaboration of educational and socio-political workers, pursuit of knowledge, excellence and social transformation as a way of life, political and academic decisions to make the education system purposeful and effective, primacy of work among the people at the grassroots level and a mass movement for solving the day-to-day problems in the lives of the common people so that they are helped to come into their own."

The Role of the Church and Christian Education

In this strategy of change in education,

This is clearly articulated by Cardinal Picachy, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI): "Just as in the last one hundred years Christian Education contributed significantly, and in a pioneering manner, to the establishment of a system of formal Education, so present day needs call for intensive pioneering in the field of non-formal education. As Christians we must see that this programme of the government succeeds. The top officials in Delhi have asked us to enter the programme in a big way to make it work. This is an historical time when the Government of India is taking a mass line seriously and we must be there to help the tide to change. The challenge offered to the Church is probably unprecedented considering the magnitude of the plan and the category of the people involved: all the marginalized. This is an opportunity to involve ourselves in a new type of education at the grass roots level, training animators and doing pioneering work in the field of education for the masses."

POLICY STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ON ADULT EDUCATION

1.   Exclusion of a vast majority of the people from the process of education is a most disturbing aspect of educational and social planning. This has been uppermost in the consideration of the present Government ever since it assumed office in March 1977. While determined efforts must be made to universalise elementary education upto the age of 14 years, educational facilities must be extended to adult population to remedy their educational deprivation and to enable them to develop their potentiality.

2.   The Government have resolved to wage a clearly-conceived, well planned and relentless struggle against illiteracy to enable the masses to play an active role in social and cultural change. The present thinking on adult education is based on the assumptions (a) that illiteracy is a serious impediment to an individual's growth and to country's socio-economic progress;   (b) that education is not co-terminus with schooling but takes place in most work and life-situations; (c) that learning, working and living are inseparable and each acquires a meaning only when co-related with the others; (d) that the means by which people are involved in the process of development are at least as important as the ends; and (e) that the illiterate and the poor can rise to their own liberation through literacy, dialogue and action.

3.   Adult education should emphasize imparting of literacy skills in the spoken language to persons belonging to the economically and socially deprived sections of society. However, literacy programmes unrelated to the working and living conditions of the learners, to the challenges of the environment and the developmental needs of the country cannot secure an active participation of the learners; nor can it