

# NATION BUILDING – ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

## SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHRISTIANITY

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### INTRODUCTION

Nation-building, obviously, is much more than nation-formation. It is a continuous and ever-going process. But, is building up a nation the sole responsibility of politicians? If so, will they be able to succeed, without a religious and ethical backing? Suppose they would, what then is the role of religion? Is the spiritual emancipation of the individual the only business of religion? If then, where is its social character? If religion has a social dimension, what is the role of religious leaders in applying it to the process of building up the given nation? As far as the role of religious leaders in nation-building is concerned, where does the Christian community stand and what are its strengths and merits? These are some of the questions this article is committed to explore.

### 1. NATION

#### 1.1. The word 'nation'

The word 'nation' means 'coming into being' or 'being born'<sup>1</sup>. It derives from the Old French 'nacion'<sup>2</sup> and the Latin 'natio'<sup>3</sup>, meaning 'birth'. It denotes 'that which has come into being', i.e., 'people, tribe, kin, genus, class, flock', and the like. Evidently, the meaning of the word is highly rich and fascinating and it contains extensive implications in respect of the fundamental dynamics of a nation.

#### 1.2. Nation in the technical sense

Technically speaking, 'nation' is basically a social and cultural entity. 'State'<sup>4</sup> is a legal and political body. It necessitates a defined territory, a permanent population, a government and the capacity to establish relations with other states. 'Nation-state'<sup>5</sup> is either a single nationality or multiple nationalities joined together in a formal political union. It has an official language/s, a system of law, a currency system, a bureaucracy to regulate elements of society and the like.

#### 1.3. Nation in the general sense

In the general sense, nation is basically a geographical, social and cultural concept<sup>6</sup>. The given piece of land is composed by a variety of items, like its surroundings, climate, sea, mountains, valleys, rivers, rivulets, and the like. It doesn't quote any particular language, religion, ideology or culture as its own rightful setting. It includes varied traditions, customs, habits as well as ethnic and cultural traits<sup>7</sup>. Nation in the popular sense contains an overlapping of some of the technical meanings of the state and nation-state cited above.

#### 1.4. Political overtones of nation

The idea of the nation is often overtly political than an ethnic group<sup>8</sup>. It is a cultural-political community that has become conscious of its autonomy, unity and particular interests. The international system of the society requires political overtones in any nation for governing its interests. But, the political sense of the

nation has to maintain balance with the ethnic, linguistic, cultural, social, religious and other characteristics, lest the right spirit of the nation be at stake.

### **1.5. The French notion of nation**

The French notion of nation is of a 'community of all citizens enjoying equal rights'<sup>9</sup>. It makes it legally viable for all individuals to enjoy the same political rights, irrespective of their origins. Unity of the social basis is the most fundamental characteristic of the nation/state. The idea of community applied on the nation is commendably beneficial for the identity and integrity of the nation. The spirit of equality that is distinctive of a community or a family furnishes the nation an additional credibility.

### **1.6. Nation a colloquium of communities**

'We are a nation of communities'<sup>10</sup>, stated George H. W. Bush, the former President of the United States of America, in his acceptance speech after having been nominated to the above position in 1988 during the Republican National Convention at New Orleans. His statement refers to the way a nation sustains itself. When diverse communities, with their relative sense of perceptions and system of self-regulation, decide to stick together in a colloquium, a nation begins to exist. Nation is a notion of collective existence or existence in togetherness<sup>11</sup>.

### **1.7. Nation and the spirit of solidarity**

The spirit of group solidarity among the citizens is the essence of a nation<sup>12</sup>. Consciousness of the common and shared characteristics is the core attribute of a nation, too. In spite of the fact that the national community is an abstract community, it has lots of shared connections that unite even strangers into one single whole. Being part of a large family of the nation is the basic identity of the citizen.

### **1.8. Nation and the spirit of unity**

Nation is strong when its people stand united. When its groups are divided, it is doomed to perish. The interests of individuals and groups may be diverse. All those interests and the related inclinations may be legitimate also. All the same, pursuance of interests in a parallel way that do not meet will weaken the nation. When groups survive withdrawn and secluded, like frogs in the well, the nation scatters, too. When interests of the communities conflict with each other, the nation shatters, as well<sup>13</sup>.

### **1.9. The present scenario of India as a nation**

As far as India as a nation is concerned, recent times are not very encouraging<sup>14</sup>. There are blatant signs of disorientation and disintegration. Selfish and divisive voices and attempts are becoming powerful and that is detrimental to the future of India as a nation as well as its great Constitution. Affiliation to a certain region, religion, caste, ideology and language seem to take the upper hand and the shared identity of Indians as citizens of the same nation appear to be systematically suppressed. Economy, resources, development, etc are important, but more important is the integrity of the nation that is India.

### **1.10. The sense of being free as a nation**

The India that is built by the sweat and blood of our forefathers cannot be allowed to go downhill. The free India cannot afford to be once again an enslaved India. The rule of the neighbour can still be tolerated. But, the autocracy-based misrule of our own people is beyond the scope of being tolerated, at

any rate. The impending challenges of anarchy, chaos, communal break up and even civil war have to be avoided by strengthening the fibre of being one and free<sup>15</sup> as a nation.

## **2. NATION-BUILDING**

### **2.1. Nation-building a process**

'Nation-building'<sup>16</sup> signifies constructing or structuring the national identity of a nation. It also implies strengthening the sense of solidarity as part of the nation. It includes the initiatives of the citizens as well as the measures of the state. Though the initial steps to forming the nation are monitored in a time-bound and formal way, nation-building, as a matter of fact, is a continuous and informal process, geared towards sustaining the nation in a progressive way. Nation-building would mean keeping this process alive, in an all-round manner.

### **2.2. Nation-building is escalating the fibre of unity in diversity**

'Unity in diversity' is a pleasant-sounding as well as a noble ideal of the world and of India in special<sup>17</sup>. Diversities of India are spread over climatic and geographical conditions, social mores, food tastes and dress habits as well as ethnic, linguistic, ideological, cultural, social and religious characteristics. The spirit of unity is yet to be part of day-to-day life, to a great extent. The instruction of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru makes real sense, 'we must constantly remind ourselves that whatever our religion or creed, we are all one people'<sup>18</sup>. Attempting constantly to remain united as one people while being diverse is to build up the nation. The opposite is undoubtedly a suicidal process, too.

### **2.3. Nation-building is constructing the national community**

Nation-building, in fact, is community-building<sup>19</sup> in the national context. India as a nation in particular, has countless major and minor communities. Those communities have different affiliations and concerns also. Ethnicity, gender, language, religion, ideology, culture, social traditions, food habits, dress patterns, etc are the major variations. People of the respective groups form different communities. Those communities can neither afford to remain like islands nor conduct themselves like parallel lines. But that is a conflicting phenomenon. In fact, they need to interact with each other, learn from each other and make fellowship with each other. The process of social give and take has to be geared towards constructing a strong national community.

### **2.4. Nation-building rules out pseudo-nationalism**

The idea of 'hinduraashtra'<sup>20</sup> that is being projected as nation-building is obviously charged with a narrow outlook, selfishness and confusion. The 19<sup>th</sup> century word 'hindu'<sup>21</sup> is perhaps the most confused word today in India. It stands for divisive politics that polarize the national community and cause enormous havoc in the country. The idea could easily be substituted by sindhu or gangu and the entire paraphernalia of hindu nation is bound to collapse. The real nation is India or Bharat and is inclusive in its spirit and scope. The pseudo-nationalism<sup>22</sup> being promoted on the word 'hinduraashtra' is detrimental to India and is like a house built on sand, which sooner or later is destined to collapse. Genuine nation-building rules out this disoriented phenomenon.

## **3. RELIGION**

### **3.1. The word 'religion'**

The word 'religion' derives from the Latin root, 'religare'<sup>23</sup>, and highlights the spirit of 'being fastened, bound or held together and re-connected'. It simply signifies a 'reverence for the sacred'. It refers to remaining networked with the natural, human and divine arenas. The world views, belief systems, cultural values, etc in religion are oriented to provide the humans with a meaning in life. The essence of religion could be compared to the engine of the train that keeps touching the electric wire laid above it. It could also be understood as keeping tuned to the pitch note of music while playing a certain musical instrument. It means also playing the second fiddle and allowing the divine to play the first fiddle. Markedly, such applied implications of religion are in favour of the prospects of nation-building.

### **3.2. The word 'dharma'**

The word 'dharma' means 'the intrinsic nature of a thing'<sup>24</sup>. It is the quality or the essential character of a thing. As sweetness is the dharma of sugar and wetness is the dharma of water, so being humane is the dharma of the human being. The consciousness of human values and behavior as per ethical ideals are the fruits of dharma and all that goes with it. To be true to the inner nature is the derived duty of the things or human beings. It is the duty of human beings to produce, live and extend to other human beings qualities that are worthy of human beings.

### **3.3. Religion to facilitate being good human beings**

A philosopher, poet, saint and social reformer, Shree Narayan Guru of Kerala, exclaims, 'whatever be the religion, let man be virtuous'<sup>25</sup>. One may belong to this religion or that religion or may not belong to any religion. This is not the most important matter in life. What is really important and meritorious in life is ensuring that one is a good human being. The raw materials of religious beliefs and practices are secondary. What is of primary importance in life is the result they produce for oneself and for others. Religion is the means for facilitating the making of good human beings. Religious sense is directly oriented to qualitative living.

## **4. RELIGION AND NATION-BUILDING**

### **4.1. The social character of religion**

As human beings have both individual and social aspects, so has religion<sup>26</sup>. In the larger context, religion is more of a social phenomenon. Its social character is inherent in producing fruits of values required for a meaningful social life. Those who are religiously tuned have to engage themselves all the more in interacting with all communities in the country and feel united as citizens of the same nation, irrespective of the religious belonging. The religious sense has to inspire and facilitate transformative process of becoming enlightened and empowered social beings.

### **4.2. Much of the religion in India a liability**

Most people in India understand religion as a private affair or a matter of individual concern. They entertain themselves with myths, stories and superstitions and engage profusely in pious devotions, fasts, pilgrimages, and the like. Although some of it could be justified as against personal gratification, most of it produce hardly anything in terms of societal and national uplift and progress. Much of it enslaves and burdens them up in such a way that they are being constantly pulled back and make religion a liability<sup>27</sup>. As a result, social maladies like poverty, corruption, lack of contentment, selfishness, etc. make their lives

a mess. Building a progressive society in the country requires transforming religion into a blessing, by selective, purposeful and fruitful engagement with religion.

### **4.3. Political manipulation of religion**

Since a few decades India has been witnessing the emergence of a power-mongering force<sup>28</sup> that is bent on manipulating the already confused religious instinct of the vast majority of the people. It is highly divisive in its character and is systematically shattering the country by imposing a mono-cultural and distorted idea of the nation and marginalizing other communities by exploiting religious categories. This politically charged and overtly mistaken idea of 'hindu religion' is doing substantial disservice to the true idea of India as a nation and is obviously the real and villain enemy of nation-building.

### **4.4. Tuning religion for Nation-building**

Religion has an important role to play in the society. It has served solid foundations for major civilizations and cultures of the world, too. Accordingly, the diverse religions in India are capable of contributing much to the building up of a nation, as well. They can provide solutions to address social problems<sup>29</sup>. What they need do is to be part of the solution and not of the problem, first and foremost. Leaders and followers of diverse religions have to rise above petty feelings of prejudice, rivalry and indifference. They need to have an all-inclusive perspective of life. All religious traditions should have the basic focus on national solidarity and fellowship. An integrated approach to the nation and the society is the core spirit of religions and religious traditions in India have to prove their ethical fibre to this effect.

### **4.5. Religious leadership for Nation-building**

Leader is one who leads and takes the followers ahead in their journey of life. Religious sense has to be conducted abreast of the times. Relevance to the given society of the nation is the acid test for any religion for its right to existence. Unfortunately, most of the so called religious leaders in India are not leaders but are only religious heads or rulers, because they do not lead their followers. Religious leaders, to be genuine, have to ensure that they motivate and facilitate their followers towards making fellowship with all groups in the country. They also have to undertake developmental schemes for the betterment of the country. Religious leadership<sup>30</sup> is best when it is committed to making a progressive and harmonious nation. The challenge before the religious leaders is to undertake drastic measures for strengthening the solidarity and integrity of the nation as well as its all-round development.

## **5. NATION-BUILDING AND CHRISTIANITY**

### **5.1. Inclusive concept of nation**

The Christian concept of nation is fundamentally inclusive wide-ranging<sup>31</sup>. It has two dimensions – the context of the particular nation and the context of the larger society. Nations cannot be understood as isolated and self-contained entities that are cut off from others, like islands. They cannot be thought of as units that compete with others and progress, like parallel lines. Nations have to be inter-connected and networked as a global reality. Christianity entertains such a global outlook to what a nation is. All the same, it is true to the fact that every nation has a specific autonomy and has certain sacred areas of concern. Accordingly, the sovereignty, integrity, unity and solidarity of the nation are not to be violated in any way. Therefore, on-going efforts for strengthening the nerve of the nation are foundational to social wellbeing at the global level.

## **5.2. Concept of God as Father – the foundation for national unity**

The Christian concept of God is grounded in the vision, experience and mission of Jesus Christ. Jesus presented to the world the idea of God as 'father'<sup>32</sup>. This relational idea provides the humans a sense of familiarity, relatedness, freedom and unity as a family, community, nation or society. The filial experience opens one up towards a fraternal attitude to the members of the family of the humans. Such an idea of God is a rock-solid foundation for unity of all citizens in the given family of the nation, irrespective of affiliation to various ethnic and other communities. The Christian commitment to the nation is grounded in the vision of God as the father of the national and global society of the humans.

## **5.3. The relational dynamics of the national family**

The experience of being a son or a daughter to God the father is necessarily reflected in the awareness of the other human being as a brother or a sister, in spite of his or her belonging to different cultural, social and religious groups. In other words, the vertical relation is mirrored in the horizontal setting of life. According to the Bible, relational dynamics of life is grounded in the idea of human beings as created in 'the image of God'<sup>33</sup> and as 'the temple of God'<sup>34</sup>. The image of God is necessarily reflected in human beings of all religious or non-religious affiliations. God dwells in human beings and where human beings gather together, that too, without any discrimination of creed or association. Therefore, inter-relatedness of all citizens, families and communities in the nation is an innate reality leading to solidarity on diverse levels. The idea of God as father comes down to the grass root levels of being a citizen, in view of making a family out of the nation of one's belonging.

## **5.4. Preferential commitment to the weaker sections**

The most primary and characteristic Christian value is commitment to the weaker human beings in a preferential manner. Jesus presented himself as a good shepherd<sup>35</sup> who cared for the least and the lost and set an unparalleled example in this noble task. He revealed the mind of God the father who prefers the one minority that is weak to the ninety-nine majority that is strong. Loving as he is, he does not discriminate among human beings. He wants all hundred. This is the model for all Christians. Motivated by this spiritual vision, the Christian community is committed to the uplift of the weaker sections in a special way as its preferred mission. If Christianity amounts to anything, that can be summarized in the efforts for being on the side of the voiceless, the poor, the weak, the marginalized, the last, the lost and the least. Such a preferential commitment to the deprived sections<sup>36</sup> of the country, no doubt, is geared towards nation-building in a major and admirable way.

## **5.5. Christian community by far is a peaceful group**

Christian community, by far, is known to be a peaceful group in India as well as in the world, especially of late. This is supported by Global Peace Index (GPI) presented by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)<sup>37</sup>. Peace involves in erecting structures and institutions to create, maintain and promote peace as well as in not involving in violent conflicts with other communities and nations. The Christian community has never engaged in retaliatory measures of violence in India in spite of the many atrocities by male fide forces on Christian individuals and institutions. Besides, the Christian community is very much an outgoing, hardworking, self-dependent, self-confident, integrated, innovative and qualitative community. Freedom from either extremes of poverty and wealth, patriotic sense, national outlook, higher percentage of education and ethical character, better egalitarian sense, non-discrimination, service for all, engaging in

peace initiatives, etc are some of the creditable characteristics of the Christian community in India and all that speaks volumes in favour of nation-building.

### **5.6. Fostering interfaith relations and national integration**

The current wave of inter-faith dialogue and relations is a Christian initiative in the world and in India. It evolved from the epoch-making Second World Catholic Council held at Vatican in 1962-65<sup>38</sup>. The Council made history in redefining Christian faith and relation with other believers in a broad and inclusive way. Accordingly, it became mandatory for every Christian believer to interact with believers of all faiths, learn from them and to establish a fellowship with them as he or she makes the earthly pilgrimage to the same God of all. This insight spread all over the world and came over to India also. Since then, a lot of initiatives have been taken by the Christian community in this direction. For instance, the Catholic community has a Commission for Religious Harmony at CBCI, New Delhi, at its national office and nearly 170 units, along with some 35 autonomous centres, are spread all over the country in a national network<sup>39</sup>. Of late, other communities have fallen in line, too. Efforts for promoting interfaith perspectives, inter-community relations and social harmony are truly milestones in the process of building a nation that is more harmonious and the Christian community has been ground-breaking and exceptional in this noble mission.

### **5.7. Educational contribution and nation-building**

The Christian community is known as champions of modern education. It opened up educational opportunities to the victims of social, religious and economic deprivation. All the facilities have been kept open to people of all communities, irrespective of all differences. Innovative programs in human development, like moral instruction, National Service Scheme and involvement of students and teachers in development of the less privileged and rural based groups were introduced. Christians are originators of education as a private venture, with Government aid or without it. A good number of Christian colleges were granted autonomous status, which emerged as Deemed Universities. The fact that roughly 25% of the educational service in India is contributed by the tiny community of Christians today speaks volumes of merit<sup>40</sup>. Christian missionaries have developed in India several languages, invented printing presses, written grammar books and dictionaries, written the first books in philosophy, religion, literature, language, art, culture, agriculture and cross-cultural areas. The Christian community in India has hundreds of scholars on other religions, languages, disciplines and secular themes. Of late, there is hardly any area the Christian community, especially its committed group of priests and nuns, has left untouched. The contribution of the Christian community to nation-building through educational efforts is more than obvious and extraordinary.

### **5.8. Health care service and nation-building**

The Christian community has been very much a pioneer in medical and health care services also. Care of the sick and the suffering is a service that is the most vital in life and that has been at the core of the Christian mission. With the backing of allopathic medicine, which was developed in the Christian west, Christian nuns and women from Kerala initiated nursing care and later it spread to other areas. Until recently nursing care was considered a menial job by other communities and was not attempted. In spite of the entry of nurses from other communities to this field, even now, over 35% of the nursing graduates hail from the Christian community<sup>41</sup>. Besides, the spirit of service displayed by the Christian nurses and doctors stands unparalleled. The dispensaries in rural areas and hospitals in towns and cities established by

the Christian missionaries have been revolutionary and outstanding and have been iconic symbols of building a developed and national society.

### **5.9. Development of the rural India through social welfare schemes**

The Christian community has been running 1000s of social welfare schemes in India, exceptionally so. Most of them have been supported by Christians from developed countries as a symbol of global solidarity with the poor and the needy<sup>42</sup> in India. These schemes cover almost all areas of the disadvantaged sections. Several hundreds of Christian social service societies are functioning in the country with a focus on the poor and the downtrodden in the villages and slums. What is uniquely impressive about the Christian community is that 70% of its schools are in rural areas, serving the poor, especially the Dalits, the Adivasis and other disadvantaged groups. 85% of the healthcare institutions run by the Church in India are in remote villages that are totally or partially deprived of adequate healthcare and other infrastructures and services, too<sup>43</sup>. The Christian community has been a champion of equality of genders and women empowerment, through diverse schemes, especially in villages. New methods of irrigation and crop rising were introduced by missionaries, as well. As the real India is mostly rural, the grass root development contributed by the original and laborious service of the Christian community in the rural India has been historic.

### **5.10. Special care to the weaker sections and nation-building**

It is certainly unfortunate that lots of human beings are born with physical and mental disabilities. Enabling them to live as normal a human life as possible is indeed service par excellence. The Christian community has been singular in initiating service to the physically disabled, mentally challenged, orphans, the old and sick, and the like. There are thousands of centres for palliative care and for the care of the deaf and dumb, physically and mentally handicapped, orphans, lepers, etc. Christian missionaries have been pioneers in these services. Nobel Laureate Mother Therese<sup>44</sup>, a catholic Christian nun from the west, emerged in India as a global icon in the special service to the poorest of the poor, the last and the lost, the orphans, the old, the abandoned, and the like. The laudable service done to these weaker sections by the Christian community is creditably a fundamental and extraordinarily meritorious contribution to the building up of the national family of God.

### **5.11. Women education and empowerment and nation-building**

The Christian community has been a great supporter of the education and empowerment of women. At a time when women were almost totally kept behind the curtain, Christian missionaries opened education to girls and women. The first girl's school was opened as early as in 1819 at Kottayam, Kerala<sup>45</sup>. Women's education meant a lot more than literacy. Equipping women to take up leadership roles in the family, society and in various fields of specialization was the objective. The Christian community is very much ahead, in comparison to other communities, with regard to promoting equal dignity, opportunities and empowerment of women<sup>46</sup>. The status of women in the Christian community is significantly a lot better when compared to women in other communities. Backed by this strength, the community monitors lots of schemes for women in both rural and urban areas. Making all possible efforts for assisting half of the women humanity in the country in being abreast of the men group, without doubt, is a remarkable way of building the nation at the ground level.

### **5.12. Leadership of Christian Priests and Nuns for nation-building**

The Christian community, especially Catholic, has a system of lifetime commitment undertaken by priests and nuns. As they receive the calling from Jesus, they choose to leave their relatives and everything in their life to live a single life for the wellbeing of the society in the name of Jesus. Such an example of unmatched sacrifice is a gift of the catholic community to the world. At present, they are roughly 1.25 million in India, the highest number in any single country<sup>47</sup>. By now several lakhs of them have lived their life and set a good example for those following them now. After having had a long and systematic training in diverse disciplines and even specialization in diverse sectors, more of them undertake to serve in remote villages while some serve in cities and towns. Uplift of the poor, the weak, the marginalized and the downtrodden is their main focus in life. Mother Theresa stands out as a singular image of such spectacular service for the poorest of the poor. Along with thousands of developmental schemes, all the above-mentioned services to the people of the country are to be credited mainly to the account of the qualitative commitment of the priests and nuns of the Christian community, well, which defies comparison to any community. These mostly silent and meritorious services stand as milestones in the process of nation-building, though much of it goes often unnoticed, taken for granted and even disgustingly misinterpreted. At any rate, the quality of leadership served to the country is certainly historic.

### **5.13. Christian influence in nation-building**

The Christian community in many several major respects has been a source of inspiration in India as well as the world. Respect for life, regard for ethical principles and loving service of all are distinguishing characteristics of the Christian community. Several religious movements emerged from the Hindu community mainly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the interplay of socio-economic, political and cultural ideologies, especially from the Christian community. Brama Samaj, Arya Samaj and Ramkrishna Mission are some of them and they have immensely got influenced and motivated by Christian models of thought and social service<sup>48</sup>. The Christian Community has also made a significant contribution to the secular character and ethos of the country. The interfaith concept<sup>49</sup> that emerged from the Christian community has permeated very much into almost all communities in India, though in a more or less manner. Christian community continues to remain a positive and strong force for secularism, peace and communal harmony in the multicultural and multi-religious society that India is.

### **5.14. Social transformation and nation-building**

The Christian community has been a powerful campaigner of social transformation. It stands out in the promotion of ethical values. The policy of Christians has been inclusive, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, gender or socio-economic status. The community took active part in the freedom struggle. Christian community is unique for the pioneering commendable service it has been extending to the human society and the country in the area of education, medical care, social welfare, special care of the differently-abled, inter-faith relations, social wellbeing, and the like<sup>50</sup>. It has been a promoter of the education and equality of women. The Christian services have been extended to persons of all communities, irrespective of community-affiliations of caste, class, ideology, culture, gender, religion, and the like, just as entry to the church is open to all. It has been spreading inter-faith perspectives and inter-community relations, as well. It could be stated without exaggeration that the Christian community, though a tiny group in India, has contributed pioneering service, and continues to contribute in diverse ways and in a large gamut of areas, for advancing social transformation and for making a better and more harmonious society in India. Obviously, all the above-mentioned services undeniably state that the Christian community has been a singular champion of national solidarity, integrity, development, progress and wellbeing.

## CONCLUSION

The individual and social characters of religion are like two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. They are complementary to each other. Besides, the individual benefit of religion can be achieved by benefitting the society only. In other words, when one promotes the wellbeing of the community, nation or the society, one attains one's spiritual liberation without special effort. Further, when one serves the nation or the society, one indeed serves God, which simply means building the family of God. That would amount to state that religion is fundamentally oriented to the building up of families, communities, nations and the human societies. This is in fact the vision and mission of Christianity, devotedly motivated by the mind of Jesus. The Christian community, led by the whole-heartedly committed service of a chosen group of leaders called priests and nuns, has been measuring out to the nation in particular and the world at large insights, initiatives and pioneering services in diverse areas of social life. All that creditable service, elaborately and significantly contributes to processes of building up a nation that is more developed, integrated, value-based, harmonious, qualitative, humane and progressive.

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