

International Conference

Exiting Violence: the role of religion. From Texts to theories

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Theologizing Contextually – Sketches of an Indian Experience

Vincent Sekhar, IDCR, Loyola College, Chennai

What is 'contextual' about theology? – Reflection on God in History (Reading the Signs of Time), How are God and People connected in time and space?

Seeking answers in the Indian experience in the following stages:

1. In the 1980's, evolution of an Indian *cyclic* theological method: Experience - Theological Reflection - Immersion (in the contexts mainly of diversity, Poverty, and Discrimination).
Church's Social awareness and engagement, Theologizing with a focus on the poor, Counter-witnessing to violence done to the poor.
God perceived as the *Liberator*, Scriptural focus on the Prophets, and the Church seen as the leaven in society, an era of social activism!
Regionalization of Theological formation and immersion in villages, Importance of local Language & Culture, etc.
2. In the 1990's, the resurgence of Hindu nationalism, onslaught on Minorities, and Communal violence, continued Discrimination of the marginalized, etc.
Focus on Constitutional and Human Rights, Secular and Fundamentalist forces, Changes in the Indian Missiological thinking, Focus on Harmony and Peace with Justice, Theology of Religions (and religious pluralism) and Interreligious Dialogue, Increased presence and service to the poor and the Dalits, etc.
God perceived as *broken* or *crushed*, Theology of the Oppressed and *Dalithology* (Dalit Theology): Christ as a *Dalit*, God as the *unifying* Force and the Church's message of peace, focus on Comparative theology and religious texts, stress on Interreligious Dialogue.
3. In the 2000's and after, *newer* signs of the time like the global context of ethnic, religious wars, consequent migration, Environment awareness, Green Ecology, Animal welfare, Healthy (conscious) living, etc.

God perceived as identical with the Cosmos (pantheism), (God in the Universe – Evolution/Immanent/Process/Cosmic Theology), God as Mother (and Father) and the Theology of (pro) Creation, God's Earth and Green Church.

Eco-theology/feminism, Mother Earth concept, Living close to nature, Eco-sensitivity and Humans as Care-takers, Animal rights (also criticism), Migrant Church and ministry, etc.

4. Theologizing *contextually* in India has taken these forms in the last 3 decades:
 - a. Theology of the Marginalized and the Oppressed
 - b. Inclusive, Comparative Theology of Religions
 - c. Theology of Harmony, Dialogue and Reconciliation
 - d. Eco Theology and the Care of Creation, Nature-friendly perspectives and life-style