

Companion to Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI
on "*Caritas in Veritate*"

"Charity in Truth"

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A

- 1. Pope claims the Church has always been for the Proclamation of the Truth**

Pope in the beginning of Chapter One of his third Encyclical “Caritas in Veritate” states that the Second Vatican Council “probed more deeply what has always belonged to the truth of the faith, namely that the Church, being at God’s service, is at the service of the world in terms of love and truth. Paul VI set out from this vision in order to convey two important truths. The first is that *the whole Church, in all her being and acting — when she proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity — is engaged in promoting integral human development.* (11)*

In “Caritas et Veritate” Benedict XVI deals with the present challenges to humanity and the Church and updates Catholic social teaching with reference to them. He studies issues such as the ethics of business, globalization, the role of technology, the right to life, sexuality and family life, abortion, euthanasia, migration, labour unions, outsourcing of production, consumerism, mass media and communications, climate change and dangers to the environment and the future of humanity on planet earth.

2. Relationship of charity, justice and truth

The Encyclical explains the terms “charity in truth”. Charity is love of God and neighbour. The Pope discusses charity in the social field,

“this dynamic of charity received and given is what gives rise to the church’s social teaching, which is ... the proclamation of the truth of Christ’s love in society. This doctrine is a service to charity, but its locus is truth. Truth preserves and expresses charity’s power to liberate in the ever changing events of history... Development, social well being, the search for a satisfactory solution to the grave socio-economic problems besetting humanity, all need this truth.... Without truth, without trust and love for what is true, there is no social function and responsibility, and social action ends up serving private interests and the logic of power, resulting in social fragmentation, especially in a globalized society at difficult times like the present.” (5)... (Is this not applicable to this encyclical since it does not seek the truth on global relations from 1492 till now. “Does it end up serving private interests and the logic of power...”)

“Justice is inseparable from charity and intrinsic to it. Justice is a primary way of charity and integral part of the love “in deed and in truth” (1 Jn 3:18, to which St John exhorts. On the one hand, charity demands justice: recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of the individuals and peoples. ... (6)

“Another important consideration is the common good... besides the good of the individual, there is a good that is linked to living in society: the common good.... To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity. To take stands for the common good is on the one hand to be solicitous for, and on the other hand to avail oneself of, that complex of institutions that give structure to the life of society, juridically, civilly, politically and culturally, making it the *polis* or city. The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practice this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the *polis*. This is the institutional path = we might also call it political path — of charity ... In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, that is to say the community of peoples and nations.” (7) “Love in truth- *caritas in veritate* — is a great challenge for the church in a world that is becoming progressively and pervasively globalized.”...

The Pope writes of the “ever changing events of history”, and seeking justice and the common good within and through them. To realise the undivided city of God

and go from less human to more human conditions... in the constantly changing patterns of the society of peoples and...

3. Business ethics: State to regulate the economy

Reflecting on the present economic crisis the encyclical offers some guidelines for the ethical conduct of business and prevention of abuses such as speculative use of financial resources for short term profits. Stressing that economic life has been detached from ethical considerations he calls for a new way of understanding business enterprise. (40). Managers of businesses should not be concerned only with profit for the shareholders. Shareholders and managers must act responsibly on the interests of stakeholders such as workers, suppliers, and consumers who contribute to the life of business. The free market cannot ensure that managers invest their capital ethically in the world share markets. Global multinational corporations are powers not guided by ethical considerations or state regulations but rather by profit for shareholders and income of managers dealing with immense funds.

Every life is a vocation, he continues, to find fulfilment in “love in truth” –love of God and of neighbour in community and the nations and the world at large. Every economic decision has moral consequences. The State has a role to regulate the economy. In addition to law, charity — love — demands a relationship of gift, of graciousness in dealing with God’s gift to humans.

He welcomes the role of civil society with a more people-centred ethic, social conscience and responsibility, rights and duties. “It is essential to cultivate a public conscience on human rights such as for food and water.”

Noting the great increase in wealth in the world alongside the increasing inequality among countries and within countries, Benedict XVI urges “a reform of the *United Nations Organization* and likewise of *economic institutions and of international finance*. So that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth.”

“...there is urgent need of a true world political authority to manage the global economy:

- to revive economies hit by the crisis,
- to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis
- and the greater imbalances that would result,
- to bring about integral and timely disarmament,
- food security and peace;
- to guarantee the protection of the environment
- and to regulate migration. (67)

Hunger is a global problem calling for resolution through norms of solidarity (love) and institutions to ensure fair distribution of food and water.

On all these issues he recalls the teachings of the Church since 1891 and reflects on the lessons of contemporary challenges. He points out the dangers of attachment to ideologies, the evils of corruption in political and economic life, of relativism and totalitarianism, of the need of religious freedom and inter-religious dialogue, and of action together for the common good of all, universal fraternity.

Analysing the positive and negative potentialities of modern developments like science, technology, globalization, modernity, the Pope tends towards a middle path away from ideologies, and fundamentalisms, The crises humanity faces are

challenges and opportunities for us “to re-plan our journey”, with a positive vision for the future with confidence in the God of love.

Caritas – love – is more than law and justice. “...Caritas transcends justice and completes it in the logic of giving and forgiving. The *earthly city* is promoted not merely by relationships of rights and duties but to an even greater and fundamental extent by relationships of gratuitousness, mercy, and communion... The Pope emphasizes justice as a primary requirement of charity. “I cannot give what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice.(6)”

This encyclical is a valuable document that could be used for reflection in study and discussion groups in parishes, in universities, seminaries and civil society groups. It touches on contemporary issues giving a background to the problems and orientations for critical analysis and practical action at different levels. It shares positive thinking, and gives hope linked to action for change at different levels. Groups in the different continents could reflect on the general principles enunciated and decide on how to foster the options suggested by the Pope.

4. A Mission to Truth

“The church does not have technical solutions to offer and does not claim “to interfere in anyway in the politics of States”. “She does, however, have a mission of truth to accomplish, in every time and circumstance, for a society that is attuned to man, to his dignity to his vocation... Fidelity to man requires fidelity to the truth, which alone is the guarantee of freedom (cf Jn 8:32) and of the possibility of integral human development. For this reason the Church searches for truth, proclaims it tirelessly and recognizes it wherever it is manifested. The mission of truth is something that the Church can never renounce. Her social doctrine is a particular dimension of this proclamation: it is a service to the truth which sets us free.” (9)

The Pope presents charity as a primary function of Christian love of God and neighbour and this is to be *in truth*. Charity requires justice is done first and the mission of the Church is to help realize justice in society. Church has throughout history inspired many of Her members to live dedicated lives of justice, charitable service in different fields such as education, social service and caring for the needy. In the history of Western civilization Christian churches have inspired many to such unselfish service. All the same how far can the church claim to have been always on the side of justice and truth?

What is The Truth of History ?

While the leadership of the Catholic Church claims to have the absolute truth concerning God and humanity and enjoy a close relationship to Christ, why is it that the official Church has erred so gravely and for so long in its history? Pope John Paul II, coming from Eastern Europe, was conscious of Western European Church history, without being involved in it. Despite the advice of his close collaborators, he apologized to various peoples on over 100 occasions for the wrongs by the Church including the resort to violence in the name of the faith.

5. Papal Bulls of 15th century

Mention may be made also of Papal Bulls of the 15th century, for instance,

“Therefore by apostolic authority, by the tenor of this latter, we grant you — the full and free faculty to capture and subjugate Saracens and pagans, and other unbelievers and enemies of Christ whomsoever and whosoever settled;

To invade and conquer their kingdom, dukedoms, countries, principalities; and other dominions, lands places, villages, camps, possessions;

To seize any goods whatsoever, whether moveable or immovable, which are held and possessed by these same Saracens, pagans, unbelievers, and enemies of Christ;

To invade and conquer the kingdom, dukedoms, countries, principalities, and other dominions, lands, places, villages, camps, possessions and goods of this kind to whatever king or prince, or kings or princes, they may belong;

-To reduce to slavery their inhabitants;

(“Dum Diversas : Nicholas V to Afonso V, Rome 18 June 1452)

Appreciating the frankness and boldness of the late Pope leading in asking pardon for the past errors and sins of the sons and daughters of the Church, it may be remarked that we have not yet gone the full round of what is required for a good confession: The Church has not undertaken an inquiry into the causes which led Christians to such grave and centennial wrongs. The causes would not only be human weakness. Could they also not be due also to a mistaken perception of the necessity of the Church for human salvation? If Catholics are convinced that we have the absolute truth on such matters, would we not be claiming to know things beyond human knowledge — and that with absolute certitude? Would we not be taking over the functions of God, or making a God to suit our own interests? Would we not be giving absolute objective value to our own relative perceptions.

6. Greatest Genocide in History, largest land sale, slavery

We can also think of the way Christians dealt with the indigenous peoples of the Americas and Oceania. This is regarded as the greatest genocide in human history, we can also mention the purchases of lands of Louisiana, Texas and Alaska as among the largest land grabs in history. Thirdly we can mention the millions of Africans taken as slaves to the Americas to build up their plantations and industries. Mention can be made also of the intolerance towards other religions and the plunder of gold and silver and the natural resources of the colonies. These are some instances recalled to underline that the Church and Christians have often not been on the side of justice and charity.

This is what passes for the present world order, legitimized by the UN system, set up with their national borders as inviolable. It consolidates centuries of European victories, pillage, colonization, exploitation, and marginalization of other peoples. The structural adjustment policies of the IMF, and the World Bank do not call for structural improvements in relation to population and land. Only factors such as capital, resources and technology are considered mobile in the so called “free market” and “free world”. The present distribution of land among the peoples is taken as legal and unchangeable, except with their consent.

7. European Migration to occupied lands

The encyclical refers to migration of peoples but does not consider how the world map, as it is, was formed by European migration in the past few centuries to the rest of the world which were their colonies.

“Between 1800 and 1930 the White proportion of the world’s population expanded from 22 to 35 % “ [p 209 Times History of the World]

Overseas Migration from Europe between 1846 and 1924

Great Britain and Ireland	18, 030,000
Norway	804,000

Sweden	1, 145,000
Denmark	349,000
Netherlands	207,000
Germany	4, 533,000
Belgium	172,000
Switzerland	307,000
France	497,000
Spain	4, 314,000
Portugal	1, 633,000
Finland	342,000
Russia	8, 000,000
Austria \Hungary	4, 878,000
Italy	9,474,000

55 million people migrated from Europe between 1846 and 1924. Is this not the greatest migration and settlement in human history? In this period Chinese, Indians and Japanese also moved, but much less and often as labourers. Pp. 209, 225, 245

It would be enlightening for present peoples of European origin to reflect on how they were able to migrate in the 19th century when their population was increasing, and they had problems like the Irish potato famine.

How have Christian peoples and countries treated problems of global migration, have they practiced genuine love and openness towards others in need. The Encyclical does not deal with this major issue that will be crucial in the 21st century with foreseeable demographic trends.

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8. Some Missing Dimensions in the Encyclical

The Pope gives a good analysis of present problems and articulates an ethic of business enterprise and of relationships of persons and communities. He proposes the Church teaching as the solution for their deficiencies. He presents church history as implicitly on the side of charity and truth, understanding *caritas* as a gift, graciousness, mercy, forgiveness over and above justice.

Comment on the two words “Charity” and “Truth” as used in the encyclical is relevant for evaluating it. The encyclical takes “truth” as the highest value according to which “charity” has to be practised.” In this connection the question may be asked “what is truth”?

(i) Lack of Historical Analysis of world system made by colonial powers

The encyclical does not analyse the way the modern world has been set up by the European colonial powers with an association of Christians, especially from 1492 to 1945. The Pope seems to overlook the inadequacies of the Church in the course of history. I will mention here some of them of the five hundred years since 1492. The Christian Churches were closely associated with the invasion of the lands of the indigenous peoples of the Americas and Oceania. In addition to plundering the riches of these lands, the Western invaders virtually exterminated almost the whole of these people in North America. It is estimated that there were 80 million Native American population in these lands in 1492, but by 1600 their numbers had been reduced to one million due to wars and diseases brought by the invaders. (cf: Joerg Rieger “*Christ and Empire*” Fortress Press Mineapolis, 2007, p.283, quoting Matthew Fox)

Ulrich Duchrow writes “...the conquered territories are robbed of their precious metals and raw materials with the aid of fire-arms and slavery, and ninety percent of their inhabitants are killed in the greatest genocide in world history.”

Robbery and murder of the peoples of America, Africa and Asia is the basis of Europe’s wealth and world leadership.” Ulrich Duchrow “*Europe in the World System 1492 – 1992*”, WCC Publications Geneva 1992, p 4,

also cf. “Eduardo Galeano: “*Open Veins of Latin America Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*.” Monthly Review Press, NY, 1974

The map of the modern world was made mainly by European (colonial) expansion which was by invasion and capture of weaker peoples territories, by expelling the natives further into the interior, by wars among colonial powers, by murder of the natives and their virtual extermination, and by purchase of vast areas of land from colonisers, usually after their conflicts,

Thus the purchase by the USA from France in 1803 of an area covering 2,144,000 sq km / 828,000 sq mi, including the present-day states of Louisiana, Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Oklahoma. The price paid was \$15 million (60 million francs), or roughly 4 cents an acre. The purchase doubled the size of the USA. It is called the ‘greatest land deal in history’.

Texas was bought from Mexico in 1848 for \$15,000,000. Mexico ceded to the United States nearly all the territory now included in the states of New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California, Texas, and western Colorado was purchased for \$ 15,000,000 and the U.S. assumption of its citizens’ claims against Mexico.

Alaska was bought for \$ 7,200,000 from Russia in 1867. It is the largest state in the USA. Thus USA was bought and formed in large measure for \$ 37,000,000. Is

this legal according to international law, or even rational thinking ? Are they not sales of territory conquered or stolen from previous occupiers such as the native Americans.?

Is the USA to control such amount of territory for all time or even during the rest of the 21st century, whatever the demand for land and food may be in the rest of the world as in Asia and Africa. Are these ways in which sovereign rights can be vested in the USA and that for all time?

Similar histories could be written concerning the formation of many other colonial enterprises such as the nation states of Canada, of Latin America, Russia, Australia and New Zealand. Africa was carved out into European colonial possessions at the Council of Berlin in 1885.

(ii) Encyclical omits the truth of history 1492 - 1945

The truth of history of the period 1492 to 1945 is not subject to the search of "charity in truth". This is however the period of the world's greatest genocide. The world largest (unjust) land sales, the largest number of slaves traded and of slave labourers, the largest number of migration and settlement of European peoples in the fertile and captured land spaces of the world. Then the economies of the colonies were made subject to the needs and markets of the colonizing powers. It is the prelude to the setting up of the neo-liberal imperial system of the post cold war period after 1989.

This omission of the hard and sad truth of this period of Euro-American domination over the world makes the Pope's analysis of the demands of charity less relevant to the truth of history and to the present global human reality.

Because the truth as seen by the encyclical is not the true story of the present world system, the pope's understanding of charity as gift, graciousness, compassion, and fraternity does not include and respond to the grave demands of justice in an unjustly formed world order. He fails to accentuate the rights of the indigenous poor peoples whose lands were stolen, and of the people without food and land in a world of plenty.

He proposes a new world authority to bring about speedy justice in business relationships. But he does not consider the need for sharing of the resources of the earth among the needy peoples of the world. The Catholic social teaching has been sensitive to the rights of the working class, (specially in Europe) but not to the rights of the poor peoples of the other continents in relation to land, employment, migration, sharing of natural resources and care of planet earth? Is not the world order set up in the period 1492-1945 open to the critique that it is Racist, favouring immensely the White peoples of European origin? The colonial wars till 1945 were for the occupation and control of land (in the so called new world). Part of the truth of history is that the USA and Canada were formed as a result of the wars of the British and the French for these territories. These wars included the virtual annihilation of the native indigenous peoples by arms as well as agreements with the original inhabitants, and even the not unintentional spread of diseases as small pox through infected blankets.

The Pope's emphasis on the truth of history and of justice flowing from the ever changing events of history, and at the same time overlooking recent world history of European exploitation of other peoples during four and half centuries leaves the European peoples open to the charge of grave injustice in the past and to benefiting from the consequent world system that still continues.

9. The encyclical does not search for and present the truth in these matters

The present world system is the continuation of grave injustice by the Western peoples largely by violence and exploitation? In this connection the Pope gives two reasons which may seem to overlook human causality of these injustices. The first is *original sin*

“sometimes modern man is wrongly convinced that he is the sole author of himself, his life and society. This is a presumption that follows from being selfishly closed in upon himself, and it is a consequence – to express it in faith terms – of *original sin*. The Church’s wisdom has always pointed to the presence of original sin in social conditions and in the structure of society: “Ignorance of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action and morals”. (34)

Secondly, the Pope explains truth as a gift of God,

“Charity in truth feeds on hope and at the same time manifests its... Truth – which is itself gift, in the same way as charity – is greater than we are as St. Augustine teaches. Likewise the truth of ourselves, of our personal conscience, is first of all *given* to us. In every cognitive process, truth is not something that we produce, it is always found, or better, received. Truth, like love, “is neither planned nor willed, but somehow imposes itself upon human beings”

It may be asked whether these two references, to original sin and to truth as a gift of God, are not a way of escaping or avoiding the requirement of analyzing human history through the rational means available to us. Would not scholars of modern history be able to tell us how the modern world system came into being during the last 500 years.

The Pope emphasizing the need of truth should inquire into the truth of world history and see the causes of this mass genocide, massive land grab and slavery. Can the Catholic Church inquire into these issues, and examine where we went wrong in our mission of love in truth.

The Pope deals very well with issues of free market economic relations its uses and inadequacies. He deals well with inter state issues within the free market system and suggests the need of ethical regulation by the State for the sake of the common good. He notes that

“grave imbalances are produced when economic action, conceived merely as an engine for wealth creation, is detached from political action, conceived as a means for pursuing justice through redistribution.”

The Pope sees here that political action is required for pursuing justice through redistribution. He stresses that the market alone will not bring about justice. He speaks of civilizing the economy. There is a growing view that the State has to regulate financial investment for the common good and that it is necessary to go beyond the boundaries of nation states to ensure justice. The Pope sees the need of going beyond even the sovereignty of nation states to bring about re-distribution of wealth and power.

While appreciating this positive approach we may ask how is this to be done in a world that considers itself to be an international community of sovereign states. The encyclicals of the Popes since *Rerum Novarum* of 1891 do not deal explicitly with this question. They remain within the limited status quo of sovereign nation states. Throughout the last 120 years, since 1891, the papal encyclicals do not seriously question the means employed to set up the world system,. mainly by an extension of Western military and economic power based on violence and money.

Therefore the solutions proposed, if any, by the Popes for remedying the grave imbalances in the international order remain at the level of goodwill and depend on cooperation among the nation states. There seems to be no clear ethical judgment on this imbalance and its causes.

Not only the Popes but also most of the social scientists, universities, and scholars seem to take the existing world order for granted. What we are noting is that the changes in population and the limitation of land for countries with high population, as in Asia, will eventually lead to a breaking point, as people without food will want to move to the fertile lands without peoples.

A major deficiency in the Pope's encyclical is that he does not reflect critically on the truth and justice of the world system and thus, his solutions do not call for the required radical changes. He could proceed logically and radically from his statement about the need of redistribution of wealth within a state to redistribution of wealth and property within the global system, taking into account the control of the Multinational Corporations, that now help build and maintain a system of neo-colonialism.

There is no clear ethical judgment on this global imbalance and its causes

This is the tragedy of the world situation that there is no global, political authority capable of bringing about such a redistribution. This is a challenge for the whole international community in the coming decades as the present distribution of resources to population in the world is grossly unfavourable to the poor less developed peoples, especially of Africa and Asia. The indications of populations projections is that the situation will worsen over the coming decades.

10. Apologies of Pope John Paul II:

- the errors and methods of intolerance and violence of the Inquisition
- for the sins of the Crusades, conquest of Constantinople in 1204
- the execution of Jan Hus in 1415,
- for the Church's role in stake burnings
- for the religious wars following the Protestant Reformation,
- for the persecution of Galileo in the church trial in 1633
- for involvement in the African slave trade from the 16th century,
- for violating "the right of ethnic groups and peoples,
- and shown contempt for their cultures and religious traditions",
- for the inactivity and silence of the Catholics during the holocaust,
- via internet for missionary abuses of the past against indigenous peoples of the South Pacific
- in a letter to every woman he apologized for the injustices committed against women in the name of Christ, the violation of women's rights and for the historical denigration of women
- Prayed for an end of conflicts and asked for a mutual pardon between Christians and Islam.

(cf. Luigi Accattoli: Quand le Pape Demande Pardon, Albin Michel, Paris, 1997, 295 pp)

This list could be augmented to include the opposition of the Church to movements such as political democracy, and religious tolerance as in the Syllabus of

Errors, of Pope Pius IX in 1864, and to some extent recent opposition to Latin American Liberation Theology.

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11. Future trends... Population extrapolation... 2000 to 2050) ageing of population*

World historical and predicted population (in millions)

Region	1750	1800	1850	1900	1950	1999	2008	2050	2150
World	791	978	1,262	1,650	2,521	5,978	6,707	8,909	9,746
Africa	106	107	111	133	221	767	973	1,766	2,308
Asia	502	635	809	947	1,402	3,634	4,054	5,268	5,561
Europe	163	203	276	408	547	729	732	628	517
Latin America and the Caribbean	16	24	38	74	167	511	577	809	912
Northern America	2	7	26	82	172	307	337	392	398
Oceania	2	2	2	6	13	30	34	46	51

World historical and predicted populations by percentage distribution

Region	1750	1800	1850	1900	1950	1999	2008	2050	2150
World	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Africa	13.4	10.9	8.8	8.1	8.8	12.8	14.5	19.8	23.7
Asia	63.5	64.9	64.1	57.4	55.6	60.8	60.4	59.1	57.1
Europe	20.6	20.8	21.9	24.7	21.7	12.2	10.9	7.0	5.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.0	2.5	3.0	4.5	6.6	8.5	8.6	9.1	9.4
Northern America	0.3	0.7	2.1	5.0	6.8	5.1	5.0	4.4	4.1
Oceania	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5

We can note how the population of Europe decreases from 732 millions in 2008 to 628 millions in 2050; from 10.9% of global population to 7.0% in 2050. It is an ageing population, including many immigrants from the other continents.

On the other hand the Asian population increases from 1,402 millions in 1950 to 4,054 millions in 2008 i.e. an increase of 2652 million in 56 years. And grows from 4,054 million in 2008 to 5,268 million in 2050 i.e.. an increase of 1,200 millions in 42 years, and is relatively younger in age, without an increase in the area of arable land. The poorer countries will feel more the impact of climate change and the pollution of the earth, waters and air, and the exhaustion of the non-renewable natural resources. There will probably be more conflicts among the peoples of Asia, partly due to the pressure on the land and on food supply. Whereas Europe is relatively at peace, and supplying arms to the poorer peoples in conflict elsewhere, and giving them lessons on human rights and political democracy.

The inequalities in the distribution of arable land among the peoples of the world is the greatest disparity among the peoples of the world at present.

The grave primary imbalance can be illustrated by the following. The growing population of India, China and Japan have no room for expansion. With about 2.58 billion citizens they comprise 39 % of the human race and yet are confined to 10 percent of the earth's surface. On the other hand, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, with 65 million or 1 % of the world population among them, control 13 percent of the earth's land.

It is a gap that is sinful in its source, viz. the original violence of the colonial conquests. Its continuance over time adds to its sinfulness. The resources of the world are destined for the whole of humanity. The absence of a fair distribution of land among the peoples leads to the death of millions due to hunger in a world of plenty and of waste.

Since it is Christians who claim so much of land due to unfair means of occupation historically, they owe it to the rest of humanity to see to a more equitable distribution of agricultural land for the poor peoples of Asia and Africa. There is no legal means for ensuring international justice in this changing situation. The Pope can help create the goodwill among Christians for a more just sharing of land and food in the coming decades. This is a basic demand of discipleship of Jesus Christ and the message of the other religions also.. .

12. A turning point in human civilization – reduction of Western dominance

The discussion on the encyclical can focus attention on such problems, and the Pope can foster inter-religious relations in the direction of such solutions. He can indicate that we are at a turning point in human civilization, with the reduction of Western dominance and the coming of a period in which peoples of the South namely, Asia, Africa and Latin America will increase in numbers and be younger in age. In such a process active world citizens and Christians will be more in the South than in the North. Would there not have to be a corresponding transition of the authority pattern in the world and in the Church from persons mainly of Western Europe to those of other countries? Such a process will require a greater participation in authority in the nation states, the world community and the Churches.

The Pope can lead the way in both trends of sharing wealth and opportunity in the world and of the authority in the Church.

It is noteworthy that the Pope speaks highly of the church's social teaching since 1891 in several encyclicals of the popes of 118 years. It may be noted that during this period there is no critical systemic analysis of colonization by the Western powers along with the alliance of the Church. It is necessary that we recognize the truth of the world history and the lack of justice in this historical process.

Why were these Church documents on social teachings during 118 years not adequately enlightened concerning such global deficiencies. Is it because those who served the Vatican would have been Europeans, conscious of the rights of their workers but not of the oppressed peoples of the colonies? This situation requires that each one takes the responsibility to remedy the situation according to one's position and influence in a society or the world at large.

This is all the more necessary in the coming decades as the European peoples are decreasing in numbers and ageing. On the other hand for the immediate future the Asian population are increasing almost by the billions in decades.

We recognize that Western Christian peoples have the greater advantage in the working of the world system. This is not to blame the present generation of Westerners and Christians for this reality, but to recall their responsibility in dealing with it justly and with charity in truth. The injustice of the world system in its origins and continuance, requires an acceptance by the unfair beneficiaries of a debt of compensation and of due reparation for the damage done to others. Such remedies need to be brought about by fair and peaceful means over a period of time as the needs of the poor worsen.

These comments are offered in appreciation of the wise counsels of the Encyclical towards – Charity in Truth – hoping for a future accent on the truth of the global reality and bold reforms to realize love and justice among all humans, women and men, and for care of Nature in the coming decades.

Since the Christians are the main beneficiaries of this world order, the churches have a moral calling to present the challenge of the teaching of Jesus to share one's surplus with the needy. (matt 25, 31et sq.). The Pope can initiate such a catechesis of due sharing in and by the universal Church. It can be a conversion of minds and hearts that could lead to an impact on social institutions and political and economic structures.

This is all the more necessary because the centennial efforts at building colonial empires were thought of as a spreading of the Church and of the gift of salvation to the non-Christians. It also means an effort at remedying of the evils of White racism in the world system at large including migration of peoples. The Church's catechesis, pastoral praxis and liturgy can be means of disciples of Jesus renouncing attachment to this unjust reality and converting themselves to genuinely sharing land, food and other resources with the needy peoples.

The Church needs to analyse how the message of love of God and neighbour revealed by Jesus Christ seems to have been gravely distorted during many centuries till the Second Vatican Council in 1962-1965. Further has not the truth of history been so overlooked by Christians and the Church to forget the harm they have done to other peoples, other religions and nature itself during nearly a millennium. We can all profit by reflecting on the hundred and more apologies of the Pope John Paul 11 to the groups thus offended.

Pope John Paul II did not, however, take these apologies to their practical consequences of a good and integral confession and penance including : to asses the extent of the damage, reparation, compensation, cancellation of foreign debt of former colonies, firm purpose of amendment, avoiding occasions of sin. The tone of the encyclical would be less self justifying and more self purifying if it would undertake a good analysis of these historical realities, seeing also the neo-colonial re-domination of the world by the super powers and their multinationals. Can not the universities, seminaries and research institutes of Christians and civil society help us all in seeking the truth and action of justice and charity to build a better world as the Pope desires.

13. Vision and some proposals of a possible just world order

The Pope can help to articulate a vision of a just world. Within that framework there can be proposals for reducing inequality within the present system of nation states. Some such proposals are –

- the taxation, of land possessed by a nation state in relation to its population.
- International aid – that could be a form of compensation for past exploitation
- Acceptance of migrants from the poor countries with high population and poverty to land rich countries without many people, such as from Asia and Africa to USA, Canada and Oceania, in a planned peaceful manner. It would be required to safeguard the life and human rights of migrants, many of whom are women from Asian and African countries.
- Technology transfer from the developed countries to less developed ones. without domination by capital and trade through the Multinationals.
- Fair Trade – without protection by developed countries against imports from developing countries, and without subsidies for exports from the developed countries such as in the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union.

The Pope can influence over a billion people through the Church. In this connection he can promote a catechesis on the equality of peoples, with forgiveness by all sides of the wrongs of history. The Church can undertake a process of healing memories and of building goodwill among peoples to a transformation of minds and hearts. In such a positive approach the Pope can promote a re-thinking of theology that does not discriminate against the others and fosters a spirituality of love, caring and sharing of resources. This could be a true charity –love in truth - with effective global justice. The religions can be in dialogue on these issues and cooperate for their realization.

It may be necessary **in a longer term to think of more radical solutions**, such as planned sharing of land according to population, Thus the Chinese and South Asians who form about 40% of the world population can be provided with more land from areas that are not cultivated at present. For such a proposal to be considered and implemented, it will be necessary to have a global institution that is representative, enlightened and powerful enough to carry out such an acceptable plan. In the long term, such radical changes would be manifestly required according to the changing population – land relationship. The Pope can expose the grave sin of this systemic injustice and seek remedies for it.

(Arable land and population p 24)

Reflecting on this data, seeing the difference between arable land per person in Oceania (1.56 hectares) and in Asia (0.13 hectares), the Pope can expose the grave sin of this systemic injustice and inspire remedies for it. Christian Churches can take the initiative in this regard as their members control much of the available fertile land spaces of the planet earth. When recycling the “Our Father”, Christians can reflect how they impede poor people getting their daily bread due to such global injustice.

The world religions hold a similar message of sharing and caring for all. It is desirable that they work together to change the mindsets of the peoples according to the shared core values of the religions. The Pope can promote inter-religious dialogue and cooperative action to bring about an equitable re-distribution of population and resources at the global level. As the population increases in the South, especially in Asian countries, the pressure for better sharing of land and resources in the world will grow. Christian Churches can take the initiative in this regard as their members control much of the available fertile land spaces of the planet earth.

A similar approach is recommended by the Pope concerning the **care of non renewable natural sources**. If we want to construct a better world, he advocates the requirement of a worldwide redistribution of energy resources that should not be left for the first comers or takers, In this context also he speaks of a world authority with institutional means for regulating the use of scarce resources such as oil. He points out the need of influencing the life style of nations in order to provide for the needs of the poor and for the future generations. In this context also he is aware of the need of a united action of global solidarity, but he does not inquire into how this inequality and immorality developed in the world.

14. Church can learn much from a serious dialogue on these issues

It would be beneficial if pluralist groups would dialogue on these issues for our common good. The Pope recommends the setting up of a true world political authority (with teeth). Would it not be an inspiring leadership if the Pope would set up a similar authority within the Church, at least as a truly consultative agency on socio-political issues? It would be in the direction of the Vatican II recommendation on collegiality. Then committed persons like Eduardo Galeano could contribute to the formation of Catholic Social Teaching with their sensitivity to the experience of

people of their localities. The Pope stated he wanted to listen to the Spirit in the world. Secular society might be able to contribute much to the wisdom of the Church in such an opening to civil society and to the basic ecclesial groups world wide. This is all the more advisable since the majority of the younger and active Catholics are increasingly in the South – given the secularization in the North West and Oceania.

In the present situation the Pope can contribute much to find out and announce the truth of recent human history since 1492. He can gather together scholars and activists regarding the global situation as he has done so well concerning the economy and the financial crisis, clarifying principles and making recommendations for their solutions. The Pope can find out what are the causes of great inequalities and imbalances in the world situations concerning wealth and productivity, population and land, availability of technology and natural resources.

The Pope can lead in reflecting on the UN projections of population that are available up to 2050, not to mention forecasts for 2150 and 2300. These indicate a growing imbalance in the future decades with an increase of several billions in Asia, and probably Africa, while peoples of European origin will decrease and age rather significantly. The Pope would render a service to humanity if he would highlight these issues in another document written in consultation with competent scholars from diverse disciplines and backgrounds.

At the same time the Pope himself could continue the tradition of apologies of his predecessor John Paul II for such harm to humanity by the sons and daughters of the Church. He could speak also of the necessity of repentance, reparations, compensation for such damages and reconciliation with the other religions and cultures. He could also present a vision of a new world order that is more humane and humanizing. What the Pope says about the ethics of business and the solutions for the present crisis are very valuable and relevant to modern society; likewise his views concerning sustainable development and care of the earth. Our comment is on the deficiency of one approach namely the truth of the origin and consequences of the modern world social system. This is very important for the critical evaluation of human history since 1492, for present restructuring of the world order, and for meeting the future challenges of population and global land distribution. He could then forestall global needs of food and drink for the needy, and prevent unnecessary conflicts..

The encyclicals of last 118 years can be complemented with the addition of the history of the setting up of the present world order. It would be useful for the Pope and the Church leadership to inquire as to how and why such an omission has been made over such a long period of time. Is it possibly because consultants for the encyclicals have been persons without much contact with the victims of history? It looks as if the encyclicals have been written by and for the victors of history.

The Church would have much to learn and gain from a serious dialogue on these issues with activists and scholars of other faiths and cultures, who have a not so pleasant experience and memory of powerful Christian powers during the past five centuries. As the Pope mentions the human community can get together to build a civilization of love and truth in this century which commenced with a “war against terror” since March 2003.

In his inauguration homily Pope Benedict XVI said

“My real program of governance is not to do my own will, not to pursue my own ideas, but to listen with the whole church, to the word and the will of the Lord, to be guided by Him, so that He himself will lead the Church at this hour of our history.”

This reflection shows that the Catholic Church has had to correct herself on several issues during the course of the centuries. Some such issues are the claim that the Catholic Church is the :

- a) sole possessor of the truth about God, ignoring that the Spirit of God is present to all persons, cultures and historical events and processes
- b) is the unique and necessary path to human salvation.
- c) Can marginalize women in Church and society and exclude them from decision making.
- d) Could have recourse to violence as a means of spreading the faith,
- e) Could adopt authoritarian ways of suppressing dissent on doctrines.
- f) can tolerate, encourage and even profit from colonial imperialist policies.
- g) Teaches that the way to human salvation depends on amends made to God the Father for the sins of humanity by Jesus Christ by his death on the cross. This view overlooked the social mission of Jesus in working for the liberation of the poor and oppressed. The Church accordingly stressed works of charity but neglected action for social justice and the reform of the social structures within countries and the world at large. On this basis Christian spirituality encouraged humble acceptance of domination by others, as a way of discipleship of Jesus who is said to have accepted suffering even unto death on the cross, to make amends to the Father for the sins of humanity.
- h) Due to this perspective the spiritual life was interpreted more as a flight from the world rather than as a commitment to realise the kingdom of God on earth. During over 15 centuries, till recently, the accent in Christian spirituality was more on charity and works of mercy and less on social justice, and on the need of reforming the unjust world order which Christians too helped to set up. Thus even at the beginning of the 21st century Euro-Americans control most of the land and resources of the world, less thoughtful of the core teaching of Jesus on sharing with the needy.
- i) The liturgy was made more a ritual than an expression and experience of the love of God and neighbour. Thousands of Holy Masses can be celebrated in a country without much serious reflection on and impact on social justice in a world of great inequalities and armed conflicts. Prayer and meditation can be, de facto, indifferent to unjust social realities and to gross violations of human rights. If the Sunday Eucharist were so celebrated throughout the Christian world that participants reflected on their duty of practically repairing the unfair distribution of food in the world, and on the need of joining in global steps to bring about an effective communion of food and land in the world, it could lead the way to peaceful transformation of the world's social structures. The churches could influence hundreds of millions of believers in this mission throughout the years.
- j) This encyclical too does not acknowledge the truth about the unjust origin and continuance of the present world system, and the European (Christian) responsibility for it. It does not face the critical issue of "charity in truth", much less justice concerning the real truth of the global order. Can not the Pope, as the head of the Catholic Magisterium, analyse the truth of the world order; apologise for Church participation in this disorder and initiate a deep re-educational programme of catechesis

and pastoral practice to realise justice (including and surpassing mere charity in the coming decades)?

Benedict XVI rightly calls for the setting up of a new global authority to resolve global problems. A major issue in the 21st century would be the consequences of the injustice of the existing world system which has its origins in violence, theft, purchase, expelling of original inhabitants, genocide of native peoples, slavery and unfair trade. The present world system presumes the legitimacy of the present national frontiers, and the sovereignty of nations.

The population projections of the coming decades show the need of adjustment of the land — population relationship to future population changes. The European peoples, decreasing in proportions and even in absolute numbers in some areas such as Russia, would still continue to hold a greater portion of the fertile land of the earth. It would be desirable that the papal advisors study this issue. They could reflect how far racism has influenced this issue in the past five centuries, and still has its bearing on global migration.

If there is no peaceful redistribution of land to population there will much suffering in the world due to hunger, illegal migration and even conflicts among peoples. A key issue will be whether humanity can resolve this issue in a rationally planned and peaceful manner.

What can the world religions contribute towards such a solution. In this connection the Pope can initiate a reflection on how much Christians are responsible for this global inequality. How will Christians practice the virtue “of living the truth in charity”, beginning with restoring the rights of the native peoples and going further to share the land with the people without land and food. Planet earth is the gift of the Creator God for all humanity. How can the earth be preserved in this century from human pollution, and be equitably shared among all persons and communities irrespective of class and race?

The Pope may not be called to give solutions to technical problems in the new global authority he envisages. But he can contribute to reflection on the type of participative structures, the agenda and international agreements for global justice. He and the Church can foster the transformation of minds and hearts to living according to the gospel values of gift and sharing food and land with the hungry and needy. The encyclical can be courageously followed by moral and spiritual responses to such challenges.

It is noteworthy that the Social Doctrine of the Church does not seem to deal with colonialism from the landmark encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII in 1891 till a mention of neo colonialism under foreign debt in *Centesimus Annus* of John Paul II. Even the present encyclical “*Caritas in Veritate*” does not deal with the continuing effects of colonialism. Can it be hoped that this lack of global (Southern) participation will be remedied in the 21st century.

T.Balasuriya, 2009.