



Basic Christian Communities as Agents of Building Relationships and Integral Healing

Ms. ANOJA SABI J.R

Ph.D Scholar, P.G & Research Department of History, Government Arts College (Autonomous), Kumbakonam

KEYWORDS

Introduction:-

The Basic Christian Communities can be described as the smallest cell of the church. It is not just part of the whole; it is a germ (or) a seed which has within itself all the essential elements of the church. Moreover, it is simple, supremely effective and can truly bring that church to birth and present a radically new model of church. It is the same church, the universal sacrament of salvation, which continues the prophetic, priestly, pastoral mission of Christ. It is a community of faith, worship and love. It is another way of community expression. Ultimately the personal aspect of Jesus' healing can be realized in the Basic Christian Communities (here in after called BCCs). It helps the mission of the church through the realization of the identity of the church as communion. In the present ecclesial situation, Trivandrum Latin Diocese notices that Basic Christian Communities are becoming the agents of building relationships between the individuals, communities and even churches. The potentiality of BCCs in sharing the Good News in various situations was fully recognized by Popes Paw VI and John Paul II. Although the BCCs, as a new way being Church, have their roots in the Third World Countries, the spirit and dynamism of its is being applied even in the First World Countries.

Building Relationships : Jesus Mission

The sacred scripture presents a vivid picture of the relationship between God and humankind. The genealogy narrated in Mathew's Gospel (Mathew 1:1-17) tells us how Jesus, as person, cemented His relationship with the poor, out castes, women etc. He openly declared that he came to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim the release of the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and to free the oppressed. People from BCCs who experienced the healing touch of Jesus included not only people with physical, illness, but also the socially, psychologically and culturally under developed. According to Felix Wilfred, it is not only a matter of Jesus paying attention to the last and the least but also, Jesus is most radical when he reverses the standards of power operation. The moral progress of a country and a society is to be evaluated on the basis of how groups and people are treated.

2. The church in building relationships:

The church, as the mystical body of Christ, must continue the same mission of Jesus. The early Christian communities adhering to the universal appeal of Jesus' message began to respond in the micro level. They were growing as communities of love and sharing. The BCCs translated their belief in the risen Lord into charity.

3. Healing the sick:-

Michael was an ordinary Fisherman. He lived in Valiyathurai, a coastal village in Kerala. He was leading a happy family with his wife and children. Unexpectedly, he exhibited symptoms of mental panic. He was unable to recover. Family concerns increased when Mary, his wife, did not succeed in procuring a menial job to provide a substituted income for them. Michael and his sickness became the primary concern of the BCCs. It was determined that, rather than limiting their help to prayer

and financial aid, they wanted to concentrate on doing something for Michael. They planned to provide nutritious food. Because of their humanistic approach towards Michael, he began to show improvement. Soon he resumed living a normal life. When the BCC group gathered together with Michael, it was an occasion of immense joy. Moreover, Michael used to thank them for their invaluable service. St. John's BCCs group president addressed the members and expressed his gratitude for their co-operation and hard work. Thus, a man was brought back to life because of the generosity of the people. The animators and headers revealed that they give special care to the old and sick members. Actually this is clear evidence both in the cities and in the rural areas. They do charitable work in these areas.

4. Healing the Empowering:

In India the church is also facing the threats of modernization in the name of development. Hence the church has a role to play. Ecclesia in Asia reminds us, "Human beings, not wealth or technology, are the prime agents and destination of development. Therefore, the kind of development that the church promotes reaches far beyond questions of economy and technology." BCCs are also open to new and suitable initiatives which would enable the church to carry out her mission. More importantly, decision – making takes place at the grass-roots level. So, the ministries in the church are at the services of authentic concerns in the community.

5. Empowering Women:-

According to a resource person of a BCCs team, Graicy Albert from Chinnathurai parish of Thoothoor Forane, women have become more aware of their rightful place in society. They no longer choose to remain isolated from the main stream of society. This has made them persons who can think for themselves. They have become active participants in their communities. In fact, women gain the courage to express their views and concerns in public and in the BCCs. This had not been the case before they became BCC members. Now women have become conscious of their leadership capabilities. Because of the opportunities to be office bearers in the BCCs, young women are able to face interviewers when they apply for jobs. They are becoming more generous in sharing their time, talents and energy for the welfare of their community. BCCs enhance communications between persons, open new educational avenues and expand new job possibilities. This organization provides leadership classes, forms better citizens and thus enable members to participate actively and contribute in the best way possible to the development of the individual, family, society, church and nation.

6. Healing in Families:-

The family is the domestic church and the vital cell of human society. The BCC animators become instrumental in healing the wounds in the families through their constant contact with the people. They contribute themselves to sort out solutions to the problems within the family members and outside the family in the community level.

Conclusion:-

The BCCs are occupying pride and prestige especially in sharing the Good News at the grassroots level. The church, the mysterious body of Jesus Christ, is called to be visible sign in the world. It is not meant to exist in isolation in propagating God's will. The Basic Christian Communities are the communities of brothers and sisters without divisions. As they take up the challenges of the time in the families, parishes, societies etc, it is appropriate that more and more new structures should evolve in the near future. It is hoped that further studies in this aspect may help improving the existing communities.

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