

Eucharist as an Alternative Space to the Globalization of Media  
Rev Dr Joshva Raja

**A Story of a Eucharist**

Manjolai is a small tea estate, owned by a group of shareholders under the name of Bombay Burma Trading Corporation<sup>1</sup>. It has seven estates with more than 2000 full time workers. Majority of the labourers is from Dalit Communities. I worked in this place as a priest in 1994 and 1995. During my ministry there I experimented a project for the CSI synod named a 'Labourer's awareness project'. Interestingly the church became the centre of the community and the priest was seen as a labour union representative. As I ran this project I could mediate between the company managers and labourers. Very often during and after the Holy Communion service the congregation shares their problems and issues among themselves. This provided space for the members and even for the non-Christians a space to express their voices. The church invited the managers for many of our project initiatives and so had a reasonably good relationship with the executives in the company.

Many of their problems were raised by our project coordinator with the managers and thereby they attempted to address a few of them. At times managers and executives themselves were present in our post communion discussions. But when I left for studies, the following priests too had good relationship with people and also with company. But unfortunately in 1998 the CSI priest and a new political group joined together and encouraged the labourers to agitate against the company. This led to the closure of company and murder of a number of people by the political groups and by the police. My Bishop, myself and the company's former executives attempted to mediate but the local political group known as 'Pudhiya Tamilagam (New Tamil Nadu)' did not allow any immediate solution to this problem. This became a well known dalit party in Tamil Nadu<sup>2</sup>. After my research degree in Edinburgh I returned to the church in 2001 March. My Bishop in Tirunelveli asked me to go to Manjolai to conduct Holy Communion (Eucharist) service among seven CSI churches there as no other priest is allowed by the police and company.

As I was conducting the communion service in each church most of the members were shedding tears and were trying to stop the service. First Eucharist was held at Manjolai CSI church. Nearly half of the congregation members are in favour of compromising with the company as they needed monthly salaries to run their lives<sup>3</sup>. Whereas other half are against any settlement rather achieving their full rights and are backed by the Pudhiya Tamilagam party. The community was divided and suspicious of each other in every work of life. Even those who were trying to workout a compromising formula were murdered at times. The total number of deaths during these years was more than 30

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1617/16170380.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2001/07/31/stories/04312236.htm>

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1616/16160210.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2000/07/07/stories/0407223b.htm>

people mainly labourers<sup>4</sup>. In such a context I was managing myself to come to the point of sharing of the communion elements. I stopped for a while and asked people to forgive each other. It was a tensed moment no one was daring to do. Then I called for the second time to say peace with each other. No one turned to the other group but within the same groups they shared peace. I challenged them not to come and receive if they had not shared peace among themselves. This is where I was told by a group of members to go ahead and share the bread and wine to people as a priest. They did not have regular communion for two years since 1999.

I challenged them to share peace even among their own brothers and sisters even if they belong to the opposite groups. It was a tensed moment where they took a long time to recognise and give peace with each other. I knew many of them by name and they knew me. Many of them cried aloud as they were challenged and peace was finally shared. They realised the fact that the communion elements would not be shared by the pastor unless they give peace to each other. This service lasted for four hours on the Easter day. After this service I continued with other services in other six churches and returned to my place. This was very symbolic and moving experience for me as my own awareness programme started with a gathering around communion table. I found people standing around communion table as an alternative space where they can be challenged of their recognition of each other's dignity and of belonging together as body of Christ. This provided the tea estate labourers an alternative space where they can express their voices among themselves and also find a way to express their voices even with the company authorities. Even after division among themselves Eucharist provided space for reconciliation and renewal of their lives.

People in Manjolai are still wrestling with the company and trying to get their wages regularly through the court. Since then company and people have been working with the CSI church and accept the priest and the local Bishop to be a mediator at times. The court cases are still going on with political intervention at times. This is in the context of globalisation process where labour laws are floated in favour of liberalisation. The companies are no more owned by a single owner rather by the share holders. The media are often siding with the rich and the executives rather than with the labourers and poor people. The local mass media often provided a negative picture of the labourers' issues. The global media was not aware of the problem until many people's lives were taken away by the police. There is no space where the estate labourers found themselves communicating their problems. It was after the communion service people come forward to share their problems in the church.

The communion service provided a space for the people to come and participate not only in sharing the body and blood of Jesus Christ but also in sharing their suffering and their problems among themselves in the presence of the priest. Other religious workers usually wait outside the church until the Eucharist is over. In the context of Global media, can communion table set a model of an alternative communication in providing a space for the people whose voices are silenced by power, structure, money and culture. An

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA200142000?open&of=ENG-398>  
<http://hrw.org/english/docs/1999/08/06/india1017.htm>

ideology of neo-liberalism cannot be countered by another political ideology that can also harm the same people for whom liberation was aimed at. But the space created around the Holy Communion table provides a reconstructed space where labour and the manager can meet and address their issues through critical and tough negotiation. This sets a background for me to deconstruct the globalisation of the communication systems and thus provide a direction for reconstruction of alternative spaces within the churches. Let me begin with a historical critique of the globalisation of the communication.

### **Eucharist as Alternative Space?**

It is essential for a theologian to reflect upon such situation and provide a reconstructed alternative space for the people to reaffirm the importance of life and of faith – both individuals and communities who can interact among themselves. One cannot reconstruct an alternative without deconstructing the ideologies and concepts that tend to monopolise and promote false consciousness among the people. Can churches provide an alternative space where the voices that are not heard through the mass media can be heard? Can the practice of Eucharist where human dignity and life are affirmed provide a counter and alternative space for global media dominated public space? These are a few questions with which I struggle in this article. In this article I give a historical background of new world order which set base for globalisation of the neo-liberal values particularly in the media markets. Then I will also point out the need for alternative media to counter such values and the process of globalisation that are promoted through the mass media<sup>5</sup>. At the end I will argue that churches can redefine the rituals of Eucharist as the community space to counter the values and ideologies that are promoted by the process of globalisation. Secular initiatives on alternative models have often failed as they could not bring people on a platform that would bind them through a particular faith or worldview system.

For me globalization<sup>6</sup> refers to the inevitable interconnectedness of the cultures, economies, communities, societies, nations and races at international level. Thus

---

<sup>5</sup> Long back the churches, temples and mosques played a major role as the centre of the community. They provided values, worldviews and attitude to her members – particularly to the children. Nowadays it is the mass media particularly television that has taken over this role in providing values and worldviews to the children and even to the adults. Interestingly it is not merely the local media but the global media which is playing this role of a teacher, priest and parent argues Gregor Goethals. Due to economic interests and the concentration of global media in a few rich Mughals, they happen to promote a neo-liberal ideology that suits their business of competition, survival and successful stories. This has led to the commoditisation of values, people's lives, service, faith and religion. Even the public sphere is shrinking into a private and personal space where everything can be bought and sold. Only those things that are saleable can be transmitted through mass media. In such context there is often no public sphere where the basic human values are often neglected or rejected for the churches.

<sup>6</sup> First of all there are many definitions of globalization. I give one or two for simplicity in defining the word. Mowlana [1996:198] defines globalization “as a process of structuration that encompasses homogenization and heterogenization – process in which agencies operation under different temporal sequences interact to connect and alter varying structures of social existence to create a structurally oligarchic, but interconnected, world”. Mohammadi [1997:3] also identifies globalization “as the way in which, under contemporary conditions especially, relations of power and communication are stretched

globalization of the media means internationalization of the process of information and communication through huge media corporations and cultural industries in every part of the world. Before we analyse the effect of globalization we need to look at the background of globalization of media. Globalization is an escalating reality of global interdependence. If globalization is one of interdependence, we need to address the issue of internationalisation, universality of values, emerging multi-polar values and meanings, intercultural communication and so on. Globalisation of media particularly eliminated all other small, alternative and counter voices and spaces by using power, money and neo-liberal ideology. The voices of people who lost their dignity, power, values of life and resources were silenced by the global communication system.

To counter the globalisation one needs to create alternative space where human dignity of all would be recognised and respected. In this space life would not be commoditised rather celebrated as part of the community. Eucharist provides an alternative space with the concept of the body of Christ where not only life is affirmed and resources are shared but also the human dignity of all the participants are accepted and respected. Eucharist can be an alternative space where not only dignity is shared but communicated, reiterated and voiced. It is the place where the voice of the silenced can be heard by all. First one has to highlight the rise of globalisation as a process. In the following section I will highlight how the global public space was taken over by those who supported the New World Order and thus commoditised the public space where even life is identified as a commodity. Before identifying and recognising Eucharist as an alternative communicative space, it is essential to highlight how the global space enhanced and furthered marginalisation of the poor, victims, differently able people, minorities and people living with HIV/AIDS. The global network of communication reinforced the local exploitation and strengthened through a neo-liberal ideology. Thus the process of communication eliminated all the other voices even from the local community space by providing a negative image of such voices altogether.

### **Background of Globalization of Communication**

In 1973 the fourth summit of Non Aligned Movement (NAM) in Algiers called for more cooperation in the field of mass media among the developing countries [Gerbner, Mowlana and Nodenstreng 1993]. The member countries established Non-Aligned New Agencies Pool (NANAP), regional news agencies and the Broadcasting Organisation of Non-Aligned Countries (BONAC). NAM wanted such cooperative efforts to operate at international level through the United Nations. The New International Information and

---

across the globe, involving compressions of time and space and a recomposition of social relationships” From different perspectives the word is critically defined. For Traber [2003] globalization is undoubtedly a continuation of Western Imperialism whether economic, political or technological or broadly cultural. The globalization of the mass media in terms of professional techniques is an accomplished fact. Globalization of the media for Chomsky [1996] means huge increases in advertising, especially foreign commodities. It also means a much narrower concentration of media sources. It will reflect the points of view of those who can amass the huge capital to run international media. Diversity and information will decline, media will get more and more advertiser-oriented.

Communication Order (NIO) was accepted by NAM countries and was brought to UNESCO in 1976 in Nairobi and was accepted as New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) resolution. A commission was set up in 1977 under Sean MacBride. The MacBride Report was accepted in 1978 in the 20<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO. In 1978 the UN General Assembly adopted this resolution. It was in 1981 Reagan Administration began to interpret NWICO as a threat to press freedom and asked UNESCO to stop and eliminate NWICO from UNESCO. This was one of the reasons for the withdrawal of the US and UK from UNESCO in 1987. From this time the NWICO lost its momentum. The US President Ronald Reagan and UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher came up with new ideas for a New World Order in which intellectual property rights and patent issues were brought up. Thus new world bodies such as International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), World Trade Organisation (WTO) and G-6/8 nations are introduced to bring about this New World Order.

The NWICO movement highlighted the problems with the old international information order that are [Kleinwatcher 1993:13-14]:

- a. the big gap in the world-wide distribution of the means of communication
- b. the imbalance in the world-wide information flow
- c. the one-sided and distorted coverage of the developing world by the dominating Western Mass Media.

Against the above problems the NWICO emphasised five major objectives in communication development that are [White 1993:22-5]:

- a. There should be equity and autonomy within Global Communication. It emphasises a vision of national self-reliance in communication and reaffirms national cultural identity within an expanding system of international news agencies and other transnational cultural industries.
- b. There is a need for establishing national communication policies that would support the developing countries communication systems.
- c. A more participatory communication institution within every nation needs to be promoted.
- d. There is a need to stimulate indigenous cultural expression and local culture industries in the midst of transnational marketing of the media.
- e. Major non-governmental and autonomous institutions should be encouraged to provide free expressions and raise the voice of the voiceless people within and outside the nation.

These are the five major objectives of NWICO movement in bringing about changes in communication and media systems around the world. It aims at eliminating the imbalances and inequalities of information and communication, eliminating the negative effects of certain monopolies, public or private, removal of internal and external obstacles to a free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and ideas, plurality of sources and channels of information, freedom of the press and of information, the freedom of journalists and all professionals in the media. Respect of each people's cultural identity, respect for the right of all peoples to participate in international exchanges of information on the basis of equality, justice and mutual benefit, respect for

right of the public to have access to information sources and to participate actively in the communication process [Sean MacBride and Roach 1993: 5]. If these are the aims and objectives then it was unfortunate that NWICO movement was stopped by a few powerful countries with the clear intention to dominate and control the process of communication. I will try to highlight the ways in which the globalization of the media has evolved after the NWICO movement and made an impact on the lives of the people.

New World Order with its new organisations such as IMF (International Monetary Fund), World Bank and WTO (World Trade Organisation) have brought five monopolies into the world. They are technological monopoly; Control of Worldwide access to the planet's natural resources; Media and Communication monopolies; monopolies over weapons of mass destruction [Oommen 1998:19]. George Cheriyan [1998:63-74] clearly shows how globalization has evolved through the new world order that was brought about by the Reagan and Thatcher administrations. The purpose of Globalization is the free flow of goods and services between countries in an unhindered manner says Varadhan<sup>7</sup>. The ultimate purpose is to give the customer the benefit of having the choice of goods and services from anywhere in the world to suit his needs and tastes.

### **Global Public Space and No People**

The first impact of globalization is internationalization of communication. The internationalization of communication is seen by some as a means of bringing nations and peoples together, and as a power to assist international organizations in the exercise of their services to the world community [Mowlana 1997:6-7]. Secondly, this international communication is also called political proselytization and is seen as propaganda, ideological confrontation, advertising and the source of myths and clichés. They are usually oneway communication systems. They are imbued with a certain authoritarian, totalitarian character which allows the manipulation of people. Thirdly, international communication and information in the global context leads to growth in economic power. Local transformation is as much a part of globalizations as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space [Giddens 1990, p.64]. Homogenization is provoked by differentiation and pluralization, yet both mutually influence each other. Broadcasting Institutions at a National Level held together the divergence and convergence which later becomes a continuity of globalization<sup>8</sup>.

In economic terms globalization creates wants yet does not satisfy the needs of the majority of poor people. It stimulates dispersal of the production process under the centralised control of corporate owners and technocrat-managers. Socially globalization divides the people, explodes the ethnic and cultural values and breeds corruptive practices<sup>9</sup>. Most of the international organisations have used this to their advantage and

---

<sup>7</sup> The Hindu, 15<sup>th</sup> October 1997, Supplement Opportunities.

<sup>8</sup> Nikki Townsley, Forecast and Recommendations: Television and Globalization, [www.matei.org/research/globaltv/forecast.html](http://www.matei.org/research/globaltv/forecast.html)

<sup>9</sup> Tissa Balasuriya, Recolonization and Debt Crisis, p8-12, in Globalization: A Challenge to the Church edited by Jagadish Gandhi and George Cheriyan, Chennai, Association of Christian institutes for Social Concern in Asia.

thus continued to dominate the weaker and peripheral nations which is referred to as 'Westoxification' (converting people to adopt non-indigenous forms of behaviour that could result in a certain schizophrenic paralysis of creative power). Fourthly, information at the international level is seen as political power. There is a concentration of the means of international communication in a few countries. When the information flows it? the cultural content of the source is often conveyed and their interests are often protected [Mowlana 1997:7].

Media technology, content, messages, professionals are all controlled by a few multinational corporations (star agencies/Microsoft industries) or owners such as Rupert Murdoch and Bill Gates. Thus the globalization process has created new global media giants who can influence and change the political, social and cultural lives of the masses with their media industries (Time Warner, Walt Disney Co. Sony - Smith 1991:21-37). Information, like other indices of wealth, tend to cluster around the already rich and powerful. It is far from being a common resource available to all on an equal basis. The heavy influence of commodities and communications, with advertising seeking aggressively to forge in consumers ever stronger links of product-related desire and purchase, lead many to fear that cultural diversity will be lost. Others tend to rejoice in the new diversities – of race, diet, language, music and religion which they see blossoming in our cities [Arthur 1998:6]. The international communication systems are controlled by a few elite individuals who are primarily motivated by profit-based or political interests. Many of these systems are entwined contours of entertainment and commerce rather than related to education, environmental awareness, good citizenship or material development. Globalization has seen information become a carefully controlled commodity rather than a freely available resource and thus media facilitate commerce [Bagdikian 1992:247 – Arthur,1998:9-10].

There is information deprivation in an information rich society. Schiller argues that today the power of huge, private economic enterprises is extended across national and international boundaries, influencing and directing economic resource decisions, political choices and the production and dissemination of messages and images. Corporate speech has become a dominant discourse, nationally and internationally and has changed dramatically the context in which the concepts of freedom of speech, a free press and democratic expression have to be considered. In this sense there is no public sphere - rather a sphere which is divided, bought and sold by the private companies and used for profit making, at times even at the cost of people's lives. There is no space that exists for the people - or the public - to share or express their concerns unless a counter means is established. It becomes very difficult to survive in the world of media market and competition. In this way the media often are used as Weapons of Mass Distractions (WMD) to divert people's interest towards a desire for material goods and possessions, thus creating artificial needs. This often leads to misrepresentation of other people in the media, thus polluting the information itself.

The pollution of information raises questions about values and priorities that are inbuilt in the practices of the media leading to the construction of media myths where poor people are blamed for their poverty, and so on. Thus sweeping moral generalizations are made

that ignore the diversity of the media and audience and blame some else for the problems. Large numbers of people are involved in this process: directors of violent films, authors of depraved computer games, schedulers who allow unsuitable material to appear in childrens' programmes, editors of tabloids who connive at the casual daily provision of pornography and the stereotyping of women, journalists who focus on the trivial and advertisers who press anything into service to sell a product, media tycoons whose monopoly threatens freedom of expression and diversity of opinion and commentators whose sound-bite analyses result in grotesque over-simplifications [Arthur 1998:31]. In this process the media's representation of minority and vulnerable religions is often negative and shows articulated ignorance of the professionals who work in them.

### **Silencing and Eliminating People's Voices**

With the new world order concept of Intellectual Property Rights and neo-liberal values are also embedded and promoted around the world. Mass Media played a major role in promoting neo-liberal values of the markets as many of them were bought by the global media moguls. It is about free flow of goods, resources and enterprises across the borders of the world. There should be competition between enterprises that make goods available at cheap prices and with high quality. The five basic tenets of the neo-liberalism are: there should be greater openness for the international trade and market and thus allow the rule of the market; the government should cut the public expenditure such as for education and social security system for the pensioners; the government should reduce the regulations on social conditions of the people such as working environment of the labourers; state owned companies should be privatised; and finally eliminate the concept of public good or existence of community by replacing it with individual responsibility. These are the core values of neo-liberalism. In simple terms for a company or business institution to survive one has to compete with the other and thus provide quality goods to succeed in the market at cheap price.

In the media market, neo-liberal values found easy way in and thus eliminating all other voices that would not bring in money to the owners of the media industry. Those things that can be sold can only be shown or broadcast. This led to degradation of the quality of the programmes and focus mainly on profit making of the media industry. If anything good is done by the churches or by the community at large it cannot be a newsworthy issue rather mass murderer or a rapist can easily fill in the front page. More negative the news is it becomes worthy of being published in the newspaper or in the television or in any other media. The industrialists and the rich owners have bought the shares of the media industries and thus eliminated the concept of public service from such cultural industries. Thus the media industries survive today as merely entertainment agencies or private means to sell good via media. They not only do not show any interest in the public service but also tend to highlight only the problems and mistakes of those institutions that are trying to provide service to the public. Of course there are still a few public broadcasting institutions that provide service to the people with the help of the support from the government.



This provides challenges for the nations, communities, Non-Governmental organisations and Faith based organisations that try to communicate to the public through various means and methods their basic values. Because the mass mediated public space is bought and sold for huge money only those who can convert religious values into a package that can be attractive and sold like soaps can only find space in space. Otherwise religious, social service organisations and particularly those whose voices are never heard in public are silenced, rejected and negated. It becomes very essential for the churches and other socially motivated organisations to use the existing space or create new spaces among communities where they can enable the voices of poor, differently able people and HIV/AIDs infected and other marginalised communities.

The next section will discuss about the way an alternative space can be created or an alternative use of media can be found among the churches, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs). This will counter the neo-liberal ideology that degrades human life into a commodity by affirming human life at the centre of one's faith and by respecting the dignity of all human beings. The basic values of many religious communities are questioned due to the commercialisation of human life in the public sphere. Communities find it hard to express an alternative views among themselves in many contexts and so dragged into a passive acceptance of this neo-liberal views. Here the religious institutions and also social service organisations can play a major role by creating an alternative community sphere where people can communicate to themselves. This is not to return to old values without being critique of them and not to maintain the status quo of the structure of the society where some people's dignity is not respected. But it is an attempt to develop an alternative space where human life is not commoditized and where human dignity is affirmed regardless of gender, caste, colour and class. In the next section I will discuss about the possibilities of such an alternative communicative space within communities local and global.

### **Let My People Speak - Eucharist as Alternative Space!**

Though New World Information and Communication Order was not again given importance by the UNESCO under the pressure of a few rich countries, the concepts have remained in the mind of many communication scholars and practitioners who were committed for the cause of the poor and marginal communities. This enabled many to identify alternatives to the New World Order and the Global Media that works in favour of such order. Alternatives were developed in many ways including concepts, perspectives and practices. But alternative types of communication existed already in many South American countries. From the mid of 1980s the alternative communication began to play the role of defending democracy and constitutional liberties in Latin America and thus represented the political excluded interests (Atwood and McAnany 1986; Reyes Matta 1983; Simpson Grinberg 1986)<sup>10</sup>. Alternative communication is also

---

<sup>10</sup> In 1960s Alternative media was understood in Latin American region as indispensable weapon of political communication to combat disinformation and misinformation to connect members, and to spread political ideology [WACC,2001:1]. Such media were basically inspired by the Leninist and Gramscian writings about the role of intellectuals in revolutionary action and thus were identified as revolutionary media. Taking Paulo Freire's concept of alternative communication some of the catholic churches have supported and developed grassroots communication among poor communities (Heresca 1995; O'connor

known as Radical communication (Downing 2001); Citizens Media (Rodriguez 2001); People's Media or Community Media or Grassroots Media or Democratic Media. Having been used in diverse ways the alternative media have emerged as one of the recently discussed subjects and practice among many of the communication scholars and practitioners. We need to study the need for having such types of communication in bringing peace and harmony in the society.

The concept of alternative media is often explained in binary opposition to the main stream media – horizontal/vertical;communication/information; democratic/authoritarian; dialogic/ monologic [Huesca and Dervin: 1994]. The alternative media are those media that play an alternative role in a community, often as alternative to the mass media, as means for social change, as agents of harmony and peace, as voice of the voiceless, as liberating agents and as counter, participatory and democratic methods. The alternative media are accessible, affordable and available to the people easily. An alternative medium does not necessarily meet all the aspects of the definition stated above. It means one medium can be called alternative medium if it meet a few characteristics of being an alternative.

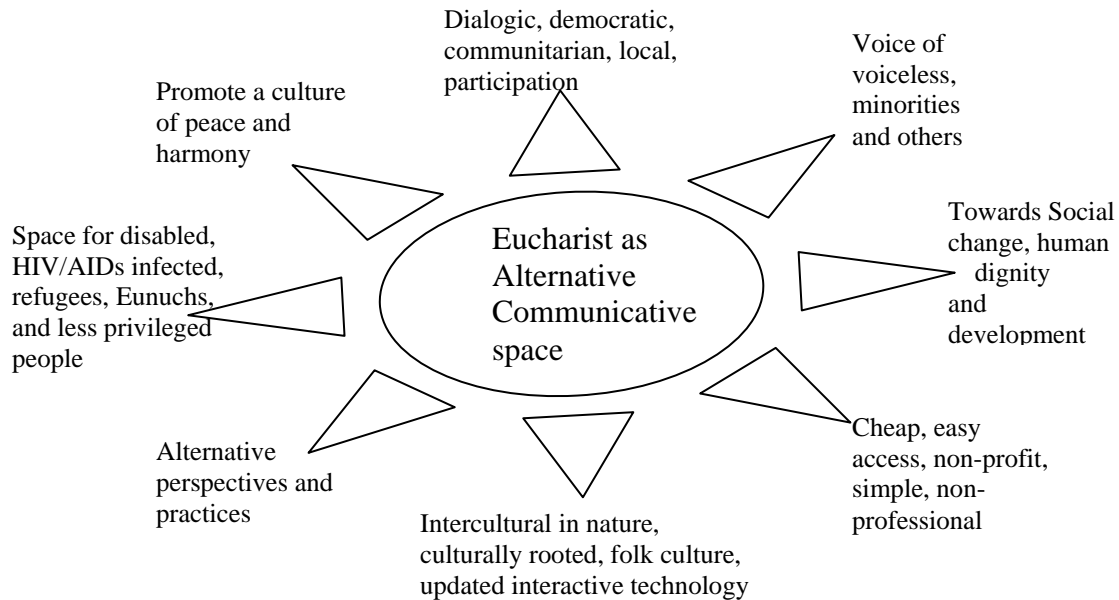
Our question here is Can Eucharist be an alternative? It means – Can Eucharist provide an alternative space for people to think, imagine and communicate in dignified and life-affirming ways. This is not possible either through the mass communication or through any other communication that divide people and communities. Eucharist is celebrating the life in Christ. It is also an act of affirming our being in part of the body of Christ. In Christ there is no male and no female and there is no Jew and Greek. It does not eliminate the difference and does not make all into one race or colour. Rather Eucharist invites us to accept each other's dignity and importantly accepting each other as they are. Of course the denominationalism and religious narrowness of many of the Christian traditions tend to eliminate or reject others from being part of this wider body of Christ. But in its real sense the Eucharist provides a space for all people to come together and share the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Those who affirm life and who accept others dignity are to be invited to be part of this celebration of life in God. This is in continuity with what Christ did and so the body of Christ becomes inclusive of all those who affirm life in God and respect others' dignity. If this is the case then Eucharist can be a counter space where dialogue can happen between people who affirm human life and dignity of all.

Thus Eucharist becomes dialogic, intercultural, local and interpreting universal/global, promoting values, entertain but not become pure entertainment, secular, democratized, development-oriented, promotes dignity of people, highlights justice and ecological concerns, remains cheap, both top-down and down-top, culturally rooted, non-profit but not at loss, promotes a culture of peace, reconciliation and harmony, involves people's

---

1989). In 1970s the oppressive regimes that tended to asphyxiate the public sphere and to let the state and the market rule made the people at the margins to find their own alternative means of communication (Kucinski 1991:xiii). The alternative media operated as a corrective mechanism to the main stream media and became the expression of the public (Rodrigues 1986: 55-56). It brought the alternatives and the oppositional groups together (Raymond Williams 1977:55-56).

participation, identifies and highlights alternative issues, not merely accepting the public opinion but challenging them as well, enter the public or community's space or create such a space, highlights public concerns as well as minorities' concerns, simple and not professionally communicated, represents the voice of the voiceless and accept people as they are, engage in people search for meanings.



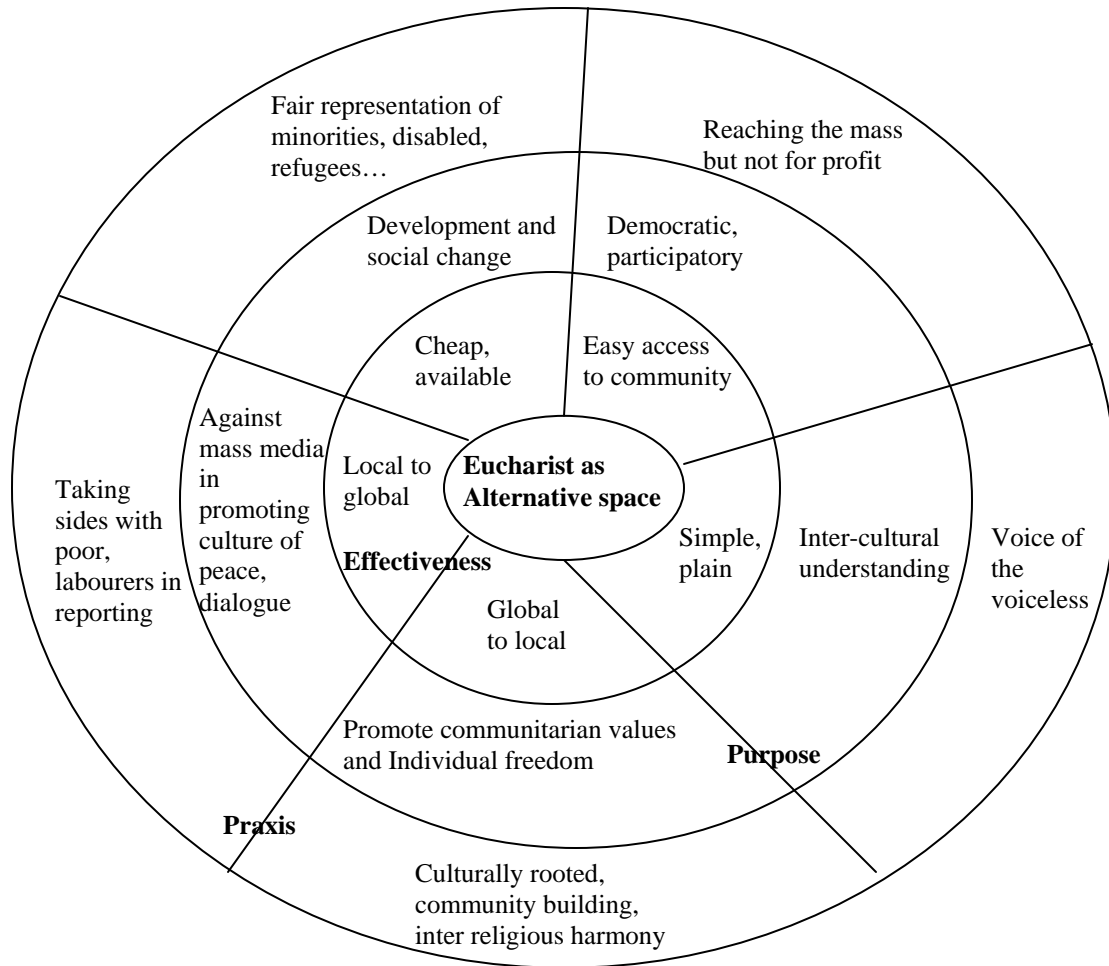
One may ask question 'why should Eucharist provide alternative communicative space?' Rather this is a Christian ritual celebration of the body and blood of Jesus Christ which are given only to those who belong to a particular denomination and also to those who are confirmed through a certain process of education. Eucharist is originally a celebration of life in God and being the body of Christ. It is intended as a space for inviting people to join and experience the body of Christ which is the Church. Having made it into an exclusive gathering such an act of celebration together led Christian not only to a separation from others, but also to conflicts within Christian community. In a way it sets a model for widening the reign of God to all. It is particular for Christians in so far as it points to universal and thus invites all to share this body and blood of Christ and thus to be part of the celebrating act of the Church.

The Eucharistic communication also should take into account the concerns of ecology, refugees, disabled people and women. It should become the means of connecting and relating people at the margins and people at the centre. It provides access to all the community members. This also involves enabling the media to become a community based media or have access to the existing media and enter the space as well. It is also taking the content beyond our interests and thus breaking the regular barriers.

Eucharistic space can be used as an alternative method of communication where human dignity is assured and all are considered to be part of the body of Christ. In my example I have pointed out that the ideologies have failed in their attempt to bring about radical

changes among these communities. Such concepts divided people and led them to violence among themselves. This led to the suffering of the marginal communities in multiple ways. It is the community's gathering before, during and after the Eucharist that bring about radical changes and enable them to think of an alternative community where people's dignity is restored and where everyone is invited to share this dignity and share their resources as well. I strongly argue that without such faith centred approach a critical engagement alone will not bring about any social change among the communities. Eucharist provides a space for communities to share their issues and facilitate discussions on the issues of globalisation. Thus it becomes a reconstructed alternative space where not only faith is expressed and experience but also the experience and social realities are communicated and discussed among the communities. Such communication does not happen otherwise at the public or community sphere through the mass media or any other mediated public communication.

The churches' mission is to provide an alternative space where values affirming human lives are discussed together with other religious communities. In a way the churches can use their communication methods and practices to create, sustain and develop such space where globalisation is critically discussed and alternatives are developed locally and globally. In my case study I suggested Eucharist as an alternative space. In order to create an alternative community space the churches have to widen the present practices of communication that serves only Christian community. The churches need to use the available methods and means of communication for this purpose or invest on new media to create such space for critical engagement of the community with the process of globalisation. Without theologically sustaining such alternative communication the churches may find it difficult to provide an alternative space for the communities at large.



### Bibliography

- Arthur, Chris. *The Globalization of Communications Some Religious Implications*, Geneva: WCC. 1998.
- Cheriyana, George. Globalization – A Conspiracy of the Rich Against the Poor – p.63-74, *Globalization: A Challenge to the Church* edited by Jagadish Gandhi and George Cheriyana, Chennai, Association of Christian institutes for Social Concern in Asia, 1998.
- Galeano Eduardo. Clowns for the Market Circus: The Media and Globalization, *Media Channel February 3, 2000*, p1-3 [www.mediachannel.org/views/oped/galeano.shtml](http://www.mediachannel.org/views/oped/galeano.shtml).
- Gerbner, George, Mowlana, Hamid, Nordenstreng, Kaarle. *The Global Media Debate, Its Rise, Fall and Renewal*, Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1993.
- Giddens, Antony *The consequences of modernity*, Cambridge: Polity, 1990.

Goethals, Gregor T. *The Electronic Golden Calf: Images, Religion, and the Making of Meaning*, Cowley (1990).

Mohammadi, Ali. ed., *International Communication and Globalization*, London, Sage, 1997.

Mowlana, Hamid. *Global Communication in Transition: The End of Diversity?* Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1996.

Roozen, David. *Alice Frazer Evans, robber A Evans, Changing the Way Seminaries Teach: Globalization and Theological Education*, Hartford: Centre for Social and Religious Research, 1996.

Roxborough, John. *Persecution: Interpreting the information on the Internet*, *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 24:1, 31-40, 2000.

Smith, Anthony. *The Age of Behemoths: The Globalization of Mass Media Firms*, New York: Priority Press – pp 21-37, 1991.

Oomen, M A. *Globalization and Decolonization: The Contemporary Challenges, in the book Globalization: A Challenge to the Church* ed by P Jagadish Gandhi and George Cheriyan, Chennai: ACISCA, 1998.

Traber, Michael. *Globalization, Mass Media and Indian Cultural Values*, New Delhi: ISPCK, 2003.

Townsley, Nikki. *Forecast and Recommendations: Television and Globalization*, [www.matei.org/research/globaltv/forecast.html](http://www.matei.org/research/globaltv/forecast.html)

White, Robert A. *The New Order and The Third World*, 21-34, in *The Global Media Debate: Its Rise, Fall and Renewal*, edited by George Gerbner, Hamid Mowlana, Kaarle Nordenstreng, Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1993.

MacBride, Sean and Roach, Collen. 1993, 'The New International Information Order' 3-12 in *The Global Media Debate: Its Rise, Fall and Renewal*, edited by George Gerbner, Hamid Mowlana, Kaarle Nordenstreng, Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1993.

Kleinwachter, Wolfgang. *Three Waves of the Debate*, 13-20, in *The Global Media Debate: Its Rise, Fall and Renewal*, edited by George Gerbner, Hamid Mowlana, Kaarle Nordenstreng, Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1993.

An interview with Noam Chomsky, *Third World Network*, July 1, 1996  
<http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=1809>.

- Varadhan, M S S. 'Opportunities' *The Hindu*, 15<sup>th</sup> October 1997, Supplement.
- Balasuriya, Tissa. Recolonization and Debt Crisis, p8-12, in *Globalization: A Challenge to the Church* edited by Jagadish Gandhi and George Cheriyan, Chennai, Association of Christian institutes for Social Concern in Asia,1998.
- Atwood, R. and E. McAnany (1986) *Communication and Latin American Society*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Downing, John with Tamara Villareal Ford, Geneve Gil and Laura Stein (2001) *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Allen, Peter (1985) 'Socialist Worker – Paper with a purpose', *Media, Culture and Society* 7: 205-32.
- Sparks, Colin (1985) 'The Working-class Press: Radical and Revolutionary Alternatives', *Media, Culture and Society* 7:133-46.
- Atton, Chris (2002) *Alternative Media*, London: Sage.
- Atton, Chris and Couldry, Nick (2003) 'Introduction' *Media, Culture and Society*, 25:579-586.
- Enzenberger, Hans Magnus (1976) 'Constituents of a Theory of the Media'. In *Raids and Reconstructions: Essays on Politics, Crime and Culture*. London: Pluto Press.
- McQuail, Denis (1994) *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed, London: Sage. Gauntlett, David (1996) *Video Critical: Children, The Environment and Media Power*. Luton: John Libbey media.
- Traber, Michael (1985) *Alternative Journalism, Alternative Media* (Communication Resource, No.7, October 1985), London: World Association for Christian Communication.
- Fraser, N. (1992) 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in C. Calhoun (ed) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, 109-142. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Huesca, R. (1995) 'A Procedural View of Participatory Communication: Lessons from Bolivian Tin Miners' Radio,' *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 17, 101-119.
- Huesca, R. and B. Dervin (1994) 'Theory and Practice in Latin American Alternative Communication', *Journal of Communication*, vol. 44, No. 4 53-73.
- Kucinski, B. (1991) *Jornalistas e Revolucionarios nos Tempos da Imprensa Alternativa*.

- Sao Paulo: Scritta editorial.
- Lopez Vigil, J. I. (1994) *Rebel Radio: The Story of El Salvador's Radio Venceremos*. Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Press.
- O'Connor, A. (1989) 'People's radio in Latin America: A New Assessment', *Media Development*, 2, 47-53.
- Rodriguez, Clemencia (2001) *Fissures in the Mediascape: An International Study of Citizens' Media*. Cresskill: Hampton Press.
- Rodrigues, Pereira, R (1986) *Vive a Imprensa Alternativa. Viva a Imprensa Alternativa in R Festa and C E Lins Da Silva (eds) Comuncacao Popular e Alternativa no Brazil 53-76*. Sao Paulo: Paulinas.
- Reyes Matta, F. (ed) (1983) *Comunicación Alternativa y Búsquedas Democráticas*. Mexico City: Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Transnacionales.
- Simpson Grinberg, M. (ed) (1986) *Comunicación Alternativa y Cambio Social*. Mexico: Premia.
- Robinson, Gnana. *Harmony Among Religions: Is it necessary? Is it acceptable? What is it for?* Nagercoil: KJPP.
- Williams, R. (1977) *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.