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Editorial

Indian society, organised hierarchically according to the caste, class, ethnicity and gender, is in the midst of transition. There are several contributing factors, both global and regional, that are accelerating this process of change. However, we do not know in what shape or form the new society will emerge. There are those who hope that a reforming spirit will engender a just and egalitarian society in our land. At the same time, there is also at work a counter movement which is reactionary. The faith towards inevitable change will be difficult.

Mission engagement in the context of transition will require to have a vision as to what is God's will for our nation today. The temptation will be to turn away from communitarian values to ego-centric and exclusive values. When values that challenge the status-quo are introduced, that will definitely bring strong protest and resistance from those who have profited by the existing conditions. Many times the people who stood for justice, love and peace may be apparent losers. Such apparent defeats often bring frustration and temptation to withdraw. Therefore, to discern God's will is to have faith. Faith does not mean simply a disembodied belief: an intellectual assent to a set of prescribed doctrines. Faith is a pledge of oneself to God. It is an active commitment to live one's faith, critically, questioningly and hopefully with integrity.

Having integrity, then, is being able to speak in a way which permits response and invites collaboration by sharing that it does not claim to be, in and of itself, final. It does not seek to prescribe the tone, the direction. And it does all this by sharing in its own working a critical self-perception, displaying the axiom to which it believes itself accountable; that is to say, it makes it clear that it accepts, even within its own terms of reference, that there are ways in which it may be questioned and criticized. It is a skill that may be learned rather than a system to be accepted.

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