



Research article



**EXPLORING THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ISAIAH 65:  
SYNERGIZING INDIA'S PRESENT AND FUTURE THROUGH  
CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES**

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ABSTRACT



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This article explores the potential of Christian scriptures, particularly Isaiah 65, to foster a more unified and hopeful future for India. It begins by setting the contemporary context of India, marked by its diverse religious landscape, economic disparities, and social challenges. Against this backdrop, it builds upon the transformative vision of a “new heaven and a new earth” presented in Isaiah 65, signifying a shift towards a more just and inclusive society amidst present struggles. From a religious perspective, the text calls for unity and understanding within the Church, transcending denominational divisions, and emphasizing core Christian values like love and reconciliation. In essence, the theological implications of Isaiah 65 provide a roadmap for synergizing India’s present and future. By embodying values of love, justice, and inclusivity, Indian Christians can contribute to transforming religious, economic, and social landscapes, fostering a more hopeful and inclusive future for India. The concluding section emphasizes the practical implications of this vision, proposing concrete frameworks and initiatives informed by Isaiah 65 for implementation. Finally, the importance of adopting an inclusive approach and prioritizing national interests over personal gain is highlighted.



## **Introduction**

In Western countries, Christianity became the national religion as early as the 4th Century CE, particularly during the Byzantine rule of Constantine I in Rome. During this period, the state and religion were closely intertwined, with many major laws and decisions influenced by religious beliefs, contributing to the shaping of their nation's future. However, from the 17th Century onwards, a shift occurred, leading to the separation of state and religion in the name of Secularism. In contrast, the situation in India is markedly different. Secularism in India, as enshrined in Articles 14-16(1), Articles 25-30, and Article 51(A) of the Indian Constitution, seeks to ensure that the state and religion coexist without one dominating the other. Instead, it aims to foster an environment where every religion can thrive independently, promoting pluralism and inclusivity. Christianity in India has navigated this secularistic vision by adapting to the pluralistic context of the country. This article endeavors to explore the contemporary context of India and its relevance to Christian Scriptures, particularly with a focus on Isaiah 65. It aims to examine how these scriptures can contribute to optimistically synergizing India's future, considering the theological implications involved.

### **1. Present Indian Context**

Our Indian society comprises of numerous characteristics based on different castes, ethnicities, religious groups, cultural traditions, and socio-economic backgrounds. Many people in the Western world think of India as an inert and distant (grouping) of people and poverty, a combination of the exotic and tragic. This misperception, popularized through years of media stereotyping, conceals reality. India is a vibrant society with an increasingly vigorous internal dynamic and an increasing influence, directly and indirectly, in the world.<sup>1</sup> Every citizen has his/her own tradition, culture religion and norms. India was and is rich in sources, economy, social cultures and religious traditions too but all these factors have many issues underlying to be dealt with and solved for a better synergizing of the future India. The following are the main contexts in present day India in which we as theological community have to deepen and widen our understandings and perspectives of hope for the society at large.

#### **1.1. Religious milieu**

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right in Indian Constitution and it signifies the right of all people to hold their own religious beliefs and express them openly without fear of persecution or being denied equal rights of citizenship. Religious freedom is vital for the

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<sup>1</sup> Hitesh Mohapatra, "Indian Culture and Globalization," 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2020, accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313717631\\_Indian\\_Culture\\_and\\_Globalization/link/5f3fc5e692851cd302103e15/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313717631_Indian_Culture_and_Globalization/link/5f3fc5e692851cd302103e15/download).



health of any diverse society. Religious freedom becomes the victim when “other” is defined in religious terms and “exclusion” becomes the new normal.<sup>2</sup>

In giving more importance to “Otherness” and “exclusion”, ‘Religious Plurality’ slowly disappears within the boundaries of our country and it will be replaced with religious hatredness. This practice of religious hatredness will lead to religious discrimination, disrespect and insurgence against other religious beliefs. This religious hatredness widens the gaps between the hearts of common people and controls the individual minds. But there is also a fact that few Christian fundamentalists do not consider themselves as citizens of India and act alienated excluding or ignoring the pluralistic context of India. The constant attacks of BJP and Hindu fundamentalists on Christians and Muslims in India have increased blaming them to be aliens on Indian land.<sup>3</sup> But in reality, all are the citizens of India without any division. This will be a barrier to nation-building. Based on religious grounds we see mass killings, harassments, chasing away, abusing, and forcing each one’s religion on the other. Misrepresenting the “other” in social media as anti-Indians, terrorists are the evidence. This is also a barrier to nation-building.

In the past, Christianity was attempting nation-building in harmony. However, the unjust religious dominance overthrew the efforts and contributions of Christianity in participating the nation-building. At present ‘Hindu Rajya’ is the national fundamentalist identity of India and their agenda is to establish the Ram Rajya into India.<sup>4</sup> This might give us a thought that maybe we do not belong here but as Indian Christian and Citizens of India the duty for us is to build a nation with no alienations and no human made divisions. On a special note, there are also fundamental ideologies in Indian Christianity influenced by the western Christianity that ‘India will be a Christian country one day’, which might contradict our nation building concept in synergizing future India.

## 1.2. Economic milieu

India being one of the developing countries is striving hard to increase its economic situation well. Over the 75 years of independent India, it has struggled to develop its economic status through various means. India being one of the largest agricultural countries has attempted to bring in a lot of agricultural friendly laws and projects, dam projects providing various water resources to the agriculture. In the same way there has been a lot of Industrial developments in India too. Many multi-national countries try to establish their manufacturing units in India like the Coco-cola, Copper extract, methene extract companies since India is rich in resources. Statistics from the Government too attempts to increase the developments of the nation for the betterments of the citizens. So, the Economic Survey 2022 (2021-2022)’s

<sup>2</sup> Edwin Jebaraj, “Nation Building in The Book of Revelation: An Incarnational Approach”, BTESSC, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Kurien Kunnumpuram, “The Challenge of Hindutva,” in *Hindutva- An Indian Christian*, edited by J. Mattam and S. Arockiadoss (Bangalore: Dharmaram publications, 2002), 289.

<sup>4</sup> Kunnumpuram, “The Challenge of Hindutva,” 289.



Important Highlights gives us a picture of how the economic developments in India has grown in recent days:

- Indian economy is estimated to grow by 9.2 percent in real terms in 2021-2022 (as per first advanced estimates) subsequent of 7.3 percent in 2020-2021.
- The year ahead poised for a pickup in private sector investment with financial system in good positions to provide support for economy's revival.
- As per International Monetary Fund's (IMF) latest World Economic projections, India's real GDP projected to grow at 9 percent in 2021-22 and 2022-23 and at 7.1 percent 2023-24, which would make India the fastest growing major economy in the world for all 3 years.
- Agriculture allied sectors expected to grow by 3.9 percent; industry by 11.8 percent and services sector by 8.2 percent in 2021-2022.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, these economic developments have even hazardous effects too. For example, on the indigenous people and the farmers. Though Demonetization (suddenly announced at midnight of 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016) and introduction of GST bills implemented (first on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017) for the betterment of economic development, it has also exploited the common working-class people, small-scale business people, and farmers when it comes to situations where the policies are not farmer friendly and Just. Like the lack of access to the new currencies changed overnight and the GST bills being burdened on the small-scale business people with high taxes. The Economic developments happen to use natural resources which put the environment in danger like deforestation and displacement of Tribal people and Animals as in the case of Sardar Sarovar Dam building which was inaugurated in 2017, since it affects a large number of forest resource animals, tribals and other rare species of the fertile place. As already known, the scenario of farmers all over India where have protested against the government for the new law for farmers in the 2020 constitutional amendment;<sup>6</sup> and their livelihood is threatened. According to National Crime Reports Bureau (NCRB) data around 600 farmers in the state of Maharashtra alone have committed suicide so far from January this year says Pooja Yadav for the India Times on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022. Every year around 12000 farmers commit suicide.<sup>7</sup> There are other ill-effects of the emergence of companies like the 'Vedanta Sterlite Copper' company where 13 civilians were killed at the protest on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018 for the closer of the company for its ill-effects on the surrounding localities and land pollution.<sup>8</sup> But apart from all these ill effects and damages, India struggles to bring

<sup>5</sup> "Economic Survey 2022: Prepared as pdf for Dhristi IAS academy," accessed 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 2022, <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/newsanalysis/01-02-2022/print>.

<sup>6</sup> These laws are the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act (ECA), 2020. These bills were proposed on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Pooja Yadav, "India Times Newspaper," 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022, accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022, <https://www.indiatimes.com/explainers/news/600-farmers-have-died-by-suicide-this-year-so-far-why-it-doesnt-stop-578047.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Sangeetha Kandavel, "The Hindu," 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022, accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022,



in developments to prosper future India in the Economic stability just the developed companies. On the final note, the one point to be agreed upon is the imbalance in the economic distribution of the country where many rich are left unnoticed exploiting the poor.

Economic imbalance refers to the unequal distribution of resources among individuals and organizations. Widening economic inequality can affect the stability of a nation in the sense that it leads to weaker social bonds between people which in turn can make social problems more likely. Furthermore, the present-day context of in India is inevitable without mentioning the social milieu as follows.

### 1.3. Social milieu

The Present Indian context explains the distribution of Indian society on the basis of urban, rural, and tribal areas. There are many aspects within the Indian society that create a linkage between persons belonging to diverse backgrounds. Yet, the factors contributing to the unity within the Indian society and the structure of the Indian society is complex and still enthralling. So, this paper focuses on the traditional aspects of Indian society, but in viewing critically the present existence we can also see issues in the society due to various causes. So, this session will discuss the structures and diverse context of Indian Society and the issues that affect the peace of the nation.

The social issues of the society are Caste discriminations, gender-based discriminations, crimes against children and women, communalism, poverty, health and sanitation issues, education, pollution, migration, unemployment, displacements of Tribal and Adivasis, and riots and violence caused by conflicts. Social exclusion is the process in which an individual or a community is alienated from others on account of their social class, gender, race, color, religious affiliation, ethnic origin, educational status, living standards, appearance, and so on. It also includes the denial of full access to various rights, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of a different group. Social exclusion not only affects the quality of life of individuals but also the growth of the nation. Social exclusion often results in resistance in the form of demonstrations, protests etc. from those who are excluded.

India's Human Development Index (HDI) rank for 2013 is 135 out of 187 countries of the world.<sup>9</sup> There is an increase of 7.3 percent in the cases of crime against women in 2019. There is an increase of 4.5 percent in cases of crime against children in 2019.<sup>10</sup> The statistics goes on and on when it comes to crimes in society and it goes on increasing every year. In this situation, thinking about a future India from a Christian perspective is a big challenge.

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<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/explained-a-history-of-the-sterlite-copper-plant-in-thoothukudi/article65570342.ece>.

<sup>9</sup> "Social Issues in India," accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, <https://www.indiacelebrating.com/social-issues-in-india/>.

<sup>10</sup> "The NCRB report," 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, <https://iasbaba.com/2022/08/national-crime-records-bureau-ncrb-report/>.



So, it needs a detailed study of the milieus like economic, social, and religious to move on further discussing various other issues.

Though all these milieus may seem to be negative or raising voice of the suffering or may even give us all a context of India being non-livable or not a home; yet, the hope of a better future might remind us about how the bible speaks of a new heaven and a new earth which might give us a ray of light in the belief that there must and will be a change, just like the post-exilic context of the Jews in Isaiah 65:17-25.

## 2. Biblical Foundation

### 2.1 The Concreteness of Biblical Hope

The essence of that hope lies in its uniqueness and current relevancy, making it so compelling. Consider how closely it relates to the current struggle for a more just society. The parallels of Isa. 65, what is true then is similarly true now. The promise of a new heaven and a new earth in Isa 65:17–25 is one of the most well-known texts in Isa 56–66. The majority of scholars believe that Isaiah 56–66, also known as Trito-Isaiah, the prophet of this oracle lived in the relatively hopeful post-exilic era.<sup>11</sup> The major portion of Isaiah 56-66 arose against the background of the severe hardships that prevailed in the time between Sheshbazzar's unsuccessful attempt to rebuild the Temple and its completion under Zerubbabel in 515 BCE. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah are contemporaries of Trito-Isaiah.<sup>12</sup> Thus, chapters 56–66 may be read as a prediction of the future rather than a description of the present experience of returning captives.<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 60–62, the climax of chapters 56–66, indicates that the future restoration of Jerusalem is the focal point of the section. The passage's context shows that the people of the era believed that God was deliberately absent (64:12). The divine response to this dreadful reality is that God is not only present but also is prepared to be so in ways heretofore hardly imaginable, the result of which would mean punishment for the wicked (65:6-7). On the other hand, in the cluster of Israel, there were still some "sweet grapes" (65:8). God gave these faithful people an image of the "new heaven" and "new earth," which creates hope in their imagination (65:17-25).<sup>14</sup>

***17 "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."***

The word "For" connects this verse to the promise in the previous verse that "the former troubles are forgotten, and... are hidden from my eyes" (v. 16c). The promise is that

<sup>11</sup> Page H. Kelly, "Isaiah," in *The Broadman Bible Commentary: Proverbs-Isaiah*, vol. 5, edited by Clifton J. Allen (Nashville: Broadman, 1971), 351.

<sup>12</sup> "TRITO (Third) ISAIAH After the Return of the Exiles Chapters 56-66," accessed 05 Oct 2022, <https://uploads.weconnect.com/mce/f90a34bcd66e597a5d391005bf1e14a7c70f1d2c/OTLevel3/PART%2062%20ISAIAH%20TRITO%20ch%2056-66%20fbp2.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Robert E. Longacre, "Discourse Perspective on the Hebrew Verb: Affirmation and Restatement," in *Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew*, edited by W. R. Bodine (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 177–89.

<sup>14</sup> Tremper Longman III, "Between Text & Sermon: Isaiah 65:17-25," accessed 11 Oct 2022, <https://www.scribd.com/document/220603435/Longman-Between-Text-and-Sermon-Isaiah-65-17-25>.





Yahweh, having forgotten the former troubles, will create new heavens and a new earth. The adjective **חדש**, which qualifies both **שמים** "heavens" and **ארץ** "earth" in Isa 65:17 and 66:22, is commonly translated as "new." It may refer to something previously unknown or denote the state of being new, fresh, or different.<sup>15</sup> In Isaiah, **חדש** appears in several major theological contexts. First, "new things" and "former things" are contrasted (41:22; 42:8–9; 43:9, 18–19; 44:7; 46:9; 48:3, 6). The phrase "former things" appears to refer to earlier instances of YHWH's deliverance in Israelite history. Reference is made in Isa 65:16b to "former troubles" that will be forgotten as a result of YHWH's new act of salvation. Most likely, "new things" alludes to both the distinctive act of deliverance that YHWH will work for Judah (e.g., 42:13–16; 43:19; 46:9, 13) and the new conditions that will go along with it (cf. 65:19b–25). Second, Isa 65:17 and 66:22 refer to "new heavens and new earth." The "new heavens and new earth," like "new things," seems to contrast with "former things" (65:16b) and "former troubles" (65:17b), hence "new heavens and new earth" may be considered at least as a hyponym of "new things." Thus understood, the creation of "new heavens and new earth" may possibly be equivalent YHWH's creation of "new things" (Isa 48:7), where "new things" refer ultimately to the impending salvation of Judah from captivity (vv. 8–20). In any case, it is interesting to note that the Babylonian captivity with its attendant hardships forms the backdrop of the "new things" and "new heavens and new earth" in Isaiah as well as "new covenant" in Jeremiah (31:31) and "new spirit/heart" in Ezekiel (11:19; 18:30–31; 36:26). Taken together, these uses of **חדש** imply that the word does not always denote "new" in the sense of that which never existed.<sup>16</sup> In the sense of a cosmological reordering of the world, this text does not take into account a "new creation."<sup>17</sup> Instead, the world order inside the "old" creation is "renewed," and one may also speak of a "renewed" creation. Heaven and earth continue to exist as cosmic structures. The 'original' creation's good order is still present, but this renewed creation will be entirely blessed.<sup>18</sup> This blessing anticipated re-creation implies that the servant community's past suffering and trauma will come to an end, and as a result, their suffering will be over.

Three themes emerge in the description of the coming new creation.

### 2.1.1. Joy Forever

God said earlier in this chapter, "my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be disappointed" (v. 13). But now that God is establishing new heavens and a new earth and wiping the past iniquities from sight and mind (v. 17), the people can "be joyful and rejoice forever" in what

<sup>15</sup> Pieter A. Verhoef, "**חדש**," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, edited by William A. VanGemeren (Michigan: Zondervan, 1997), 36.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel K. Bediako, "Isaiah's 'New Heavens and New Earth' (Isa 65:17; 66:22)," *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary 11.1* (2008): 11.

<sup>17</sup> J. Goldingay, *Isaiah 56–66: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 467–468.

<sup>18</sup> K.W. Weyde, "'For I Am About to Create New Heavens and A New Earth': Prophecy and Torah in Isaiah 65:17–25," in *New Studies in the Book of Isaiah. Essays in Honor of Hallvard Hagelia*, edited by M. Zehnder (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2014), 219.



God is doing. The new Jerusalem will not only bring them joy, but it will also bring God joy, and its people will bring him delight.

**18 “But be you glad (שִׂישׂוּ) and rejoice (וְגִילוּ) forever in that which I create (בִּוְרָא); for, behold, I create (בִּוְרָא) Jerusalem a rejoicing (וְגִלְיָה), and her people a joy (מְשׂוֹשׂ).”**

**19a “I will rejoice (וְגִלְתִּי) in Jerusalem and I will be glad (וְשִׂשְׂתִּי) because of my people.”**

The imperative forms of the verbs שִׂישׂ and גִּיל in verse 18a are matched by their nominal forms in 18b. Between them are twin participles describing God’s creative acts. The people should be joyful and rejoice, for Jerusalem was made for joy and her people for gladness. Since only God can create (בִּוְרָא is restricted to divine activity throughout the Bible), verse 19a refers to divine rejoicing. Like the people, the LORD will rejoice (גִּיל) in Jerusalem and be glad (שִׂישׂ) in her people.<sup>19</sup> The condition of Israel in the time of the prophet is then contrasted with conditions on the new earth. That kingdom is not an improved version of the old Israelite kingdom but is something entirely new. It is a new creation, where the quality of life will be different from that of the present world. Sorrow will be replaced by rejoicing. In the new creation, people will have complete satisfaction.<sup>20</sup> The sound of weeping and the cry of sorrow will just be distant memories, giving the people reason to rejoice.

### 2.1.2. Just rewards for labor

**21 They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat their fruit.**

**22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.**

**23 They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for calamity; for they are the seed of the blessed of Yahweh and their offspring with them.”**

Isaiah 65:21-23 imply a condition of economic injustice where some labored in vain and bore children anticipating terror (v. 23). Verse 21 and verse 22 are juxtaposed. If the current state of affairs prevents people who construct and plant from reaping the benefits of their effort (v. 22), that situation will no longer exist (v. 21). They will resemble an evergreen tree that bears fruit (v. 23b; see Psalm 1; Jeremiah 17:8). They will find delight in the work of their hands, as will their offspring and future generations. The vision holds out the promise that everyone will have adequate housing and shelter. In addition, people do not have to worry about being uprooted and dumped into refugee camps, their homes will not be demolished so that others can move in, and there will not be any apartheid laws mandating

<sup>19</sup> Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher’s Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1987), 396.

<sup>20</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries: Commentary on Isaiah - Volume 4* (Wheaton, IL: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1999), 259.





forcible relocations to far-off foreign lands. But in addition to owning their own homes, they will also have the freedom and right to cultivate their own crops and consume the food they have grown. Slave labor will no longer be used to create food for the wealthy while robbing the poor of what they have laboriously grown. And, by extension within our present economic order, no rampant capitalist exploitation that widens the gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots.”<sup>21</sup> Labour, according to this vision, is not drudgery but a joy.

### 2.1.3. A Utopian vision

***25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,” says Yahweh.***

A utopian vision expressed previously in Isaiah is reaffirmed in Isaiah 65:25. Wolf, lamb, lion, and ox appear again, a collocation of creatures evoking the peaceable kingdom in Isaiah 11. At the end of the verse, a contrast is created by a stronger emphasis on how once-coexisting predators and prey fed together: “but the serpent - its food shall be dust!” The Garden of Eden comes into clear view with those three straightforward but enigmatic Hebrew phrases. The curse on the serpent is repeated, but God’s curses on Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:14–19) and the serpent are mentioned. In these last days, the pain of the ancestors will be transformed into the delight of blessed offspring and enduring enjoyment of the fruits of human work. The serpent will be vanquished in the future, so this blessedness will never be threatened again.<sup>22</sup> Thus Israel’s glorious restoration will be of Edenic proportions and cosmic significance. this is a radical vision of the environment being restored to its pristine character, as bitter enemies are reconciled.

This prophetic hope is not a spiritualized, make-believe world, but rather the promise of a “transformed material world in which justice will prevail, there will be bread for all, and the human race will ‘dwell securely.’” It is a hope that “concerns the restoration of fertility, the yielding of the produce of the earth so that there is enough for all.”<sup>23</sup> indeed, our text is, in Walter Brueggemann’s words, the “most extreme statement of this capacity for the recovery of creation.”<sup>24</sup> It is an “extravagant promise” that predicts the triumph over everything that has gone wrong in creation, affecting every facet and stage of existence and making them complete, and triumphing over hostility at every level - not only in Israel or the human society but throughout creation. Nothing could be more all-encompassing, so completely different, and yet so connected to the world as we know and feel it. It is a promise to

<sup>21</sup> John W. de Gruch, “A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH: An exposition of Isaiah 65:17 -25,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 105 (November 1999): 70.

<sup>22</sup> Konrad Schmid, “New Creation Instead of New Exodus: The Innerbiblical Exegesis and Theological Transformations of Isaiah 65:17–25,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity*, edited by Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer and Hans Barstad (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 12-14.

<sup>23</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: testimony, dispute, advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 482.

<sup>24</sup> Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: testimony, dispute, advocacy*, 548.



essentially start again, to create something new through God's action while being consistent with what we value and work toward.

Therefore, the vision is not given to pacify suffering people, but rather to engender hope, a kind of hope that inspires action, not one that suppresses it. In the midst of what seems like a hopeless situation, the promise of a better future can grant troubled people the energy not just to survive, but to live with joy in the midst of suffering for a hopeful future.

### **3. Towards Synergizing India's Present and Future**

Within the context of Isaiah 65, there emerges a theme of envisioning a renewed and hopeful future, one characterized by transformation across religious, economic, and societal realms. The passage underscores the notion of a "new heaven and a new earth," signaling a paradigm shift towards a more just and inclusive society. Drawing upon the theological implications of Isaiah 65, the discourse navigates through the lenses of religious transformation, economic justice, and societal inclusivity.

From a religious standpoint, Isaiah 65 prompts a reflection on the role of Christianity in shaping India's present and future. It emphasizes the need for religious values, such as love, forgiveness, and reconciliation, to permeate societal structures, echoing Gandhi's sentiment that politics without religion leads to doom. The text urges Indian Christians to foster unity and inclusivity within the church, transcending denominational divisions and hierarchical structures.

Economically, Isaiah 65 inspires a vision of just rewards for labor, challenging prevalent inequalities and unjust capitalist systems. It advocates for the dignification of labor and the fulfillment of basic human needs, highlighting the imperative of shared solidarity over individualistic accumulation of wealth. Indian Christian leaders are called upon to advocate for economic justice, ensuring that every individual's labor is duly rewarded.

Societally, Isaiah 65 paints a picture of an inclusive utopia, where marginalized communities find refuge and acceptance. The passage underscores the importance of hospitality, solidarity, and inclusivity within the church and society at large. By participating in the struggles of marginalized communities and promoting inclusivity, the Indian Church can contribute to the realization of a just and inclusive society.

In essence, the theological implications of Isaiah 65 provide a blueprint for synergizing India's present and future. By embodying the values of love, justice, and inclusivity, Indian Christians can actively contribute to the transformation of religious, economic, and societal landscapes, ultimately fostering a more hopeful and inclusive future for India.

### **Conclusion**

In practical terms, the vision of a new heaven and a new earth as a renewed creation offers a tangible blueprint for shaping the future of India. This vision can be realized through the implementation of the frameworks and initiatives outlined earlier. It is imperative for present-



day Indian Churches and leaders to actively engage with these concepts and take concrete steps towards nation-building. Both national and religious leaders bear a responsibility in addressing the pressing issues of the present while fostering a vision of a harmonious coexistence within God's creation. This entails a commitment to inclusive practices and initiatives that prioritize the common good over individual accumulation of wealth. Every citizen, regardless of religious affiliation, has a role to play in this endeavor. By adopting an inclusive approach and prioritizing national interests over personal gain, individuals can contribute to the collective effort of nation-building. This involves a concerted effort to cultivate unity and respect for diverse faith traditions, thereby strengthening the fabric of the nation while preserving its unique identity. Ultimately, the realization of a utopian society envisioned in Isaiah 65 requires collective action and commitment from all segments of society. By aligning their actions with the principles of justice, inclusivity, and mutual respect, individuals can work towards building a future for India that reflects the values of its diverse population while fostering harmony and prosperity for all.

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