

THE SUPER DEVELOPED COUNTRY

Adaptation from script of Scotus Fernades s.j.

Intent of the story

- ✓ *To grow in awareness that the many maladies which affect our modern world are just symptoms of the collapsing of the structures and values of human society.*
- ✓ *To find a small remedy here and there for this or that malady is not enough - that would only be patchwork. Our society has to be restructured from its very foundations.*
- ✓ *To strive to build a new just, equitable and stable social order.*
- ✓ *As priests, teachers, social workers and leaders we should critically evaluate the relevance of our "Traditional" ministries in keeping with the conditions and demands of modern living*

The story.

Skipland was a country made of many islands. Everyone was happy in that country. It was very prosperous and scientifically more advanced than any other nation in the world. But the country had a major problem, over-crowding. The sea set a limit to its further expansion..

The scientists of that country worked very hard to solve the problem. The country being so rich, advanced and resourceful, the engineers found a way out. Yes, they would erect huge pillars resting on the bed of the sea, on those pillars they would build gigantic platforms, and on the platforms they would erect new cities, sort of a new country!

Some months later, one could see the skyline studded with high towers, and on those towers gigantic platforms being laid and on those platforms buildings mushrooming all over. Yes, Schools and Colleges, Hospitals and Health Centers, Super markets and malls, Factories and workshops, Stadiums and Sports complexes, Theatres and Cinema Houses, Churches, Temples and Mosques.

In fact, the best of everything that our modern world can offer was on that floating country. Everyone was contented. Everything seemed so good and promising.

People kept telling one another: "Let's enjoy the good life. We lack nothing. Let's us make merry. We have nothing to worry."

Teachers said: "What fine schools we have. Our children are lucky. They will be learned and scientifically more advanced than the children of any other country on earth"

The Doctors said: "Our hospitals are the best in the world. In a few years every known disease will be conquered. Our people will be the healthiest on earth"

In the factories the workers were happy and satisfied. They said: "We are a happy lot; we work with ease and comfort. We have no fear of tomorrow."

People were proud and wealthy. Some saved in lakhs, many in crores, others in millions. All were running in a rat race to amass money and more money.

Years later, Ted who was relaxing close to the shore noticed that the level of the sea water under the solidly built platforms appeared to be higher than usual. Ted, finally, discovered with alarm, that the floating country was slowly sinking, that the sea bed was giving way.

Immediately he approached the authorities. They haughtily replied to him: We haven't received any information from our scientists about it. Are you an expert engineer? Who are you to raise an alarm? We haven't time to waste on such silly talk. Our country was built by the world's best scientists and architects. It can never sink! It will never sink!

Ted insisted "Sirs! I've seen it with my own eyes." They retorted: "You must have been dreaming. Now buzz off and leave us alone!"

Ted thought of the helpless patients in the hospitals, the victims of so many accidents. He told the doctors: “Doctors! Evacuate the patients as quickly as possible to safer places from our hospitals. Hurry! Our country is sinking. Our platforms are giving way The Doctors replied: “You must be mad. What’s the matter with you? You can’t easily move handicapped patients like that without proven reasons! Will you shut up! Do you want to create a panic here?”

Then, Ted thought of the children. He muttered to himself: “The children, the children in our schools... I must save them” He ran to the Schools to alert the Principals and the teachers. But they snapped him: “What have you to tell us? Our schools are the best in the world. Do you think that all the money, time and energy we invested in them can go down the drain like this? Impossible!”

In a final attempt Ted thought: “Our people are proud of their wealth. I am sure they will at least, rush to save their moneys. I’ll tell the Bank managers” But the Bank Officials misunderstood him and accused him as a trouble-maker. They said to him:

“You want to sow confusion here so that you may get away with a little loot, eh?” They shouted at the guards! “Take hold of this guy and call in the police immediately.” So by evening Ted was behind bars.

Few days later, thousands of miles away, in many countries, people awoke, to find in the newspapers the shocking headlines.

Millions drowned in sleep. The super developed country sank

Ideas and Applications of the Story.

- Skipland was a very rich, prosperous and technologically advanced country and very proud of its accomplishments.
- It could boast of many fine schools, colleges, factories, hospitals, banks, research centers, libraries, churches, etc.
- Its people were busy, secure and self-complacent. They had their own reasons for this
- But, unknown to them, there was a hitch! The country’s entire substructure on which all the visible symbols of its prosperity— factories, schools, banks, churches, etc.— rested was slowly sinking;
- It would have been worth the while of the Skiplanders to question the relevance of all those achievements to their individual lives and to the future of their society.
- Skipland stands for our world with all its vast scientific and technological advances which have brought so much material progress..
- Is it not worthwhile to ask ourselves the question which the Skiplanders should have asked themselves but they did not?
- Is not the very basis and foundation of our society falling apart?
- Should we go on building more and more educational institutions, set up more and newer industries, open more and larger hospitals, erect bigger and more attractive housing complexes, put up more and more places of worship and so on?
- Should we not rather bestir ourselves and mobilize all our resources to urgently salvage the tottering structures of our society?
- Without neglecting our traditional ministries of teaching, nursing care, preaching, evangelization, etc... should we not, as Christians, rush to save our world, to build a better socio-economic; and financial order?
- It is an awesome cosmic scenario we face today - ecological pollution, a real threat of an atomic holocaust, terrorism and violence in an international scale, disruption of international relations, population explosion, erosion of moral and human values, death of millions from poverty and hunger, obsolescence of traditional socio-political structures, plunders of the earth’s natural resources, loss of the meaning of life. It is time to awake to our fundamental barbarism and do something about it!
- It is time to ask ourselves the question: How relevant are our traditional works and ministries with their domestic concerns and parochial interests in comparison to the gigantic problems facing us?
- Every single ministry of ours should be given a new orientation. We have to muster all men of good will to save our “Skipland, ” our world, our habitat from submergence.
- Modern man has built the foundation of our society in the soil of materialism. He trusted, not in God, but in his own skill and power.

- Now that our society is crumbling he is not willing either to own up his error or let anyone speak the truth.
- Ted - the prophet of Skipland - who tried to open the eyes of his fellow citizens ended up behind bars. Christ was crucified for rebelling against the standards of the unjust, hedonistic and materialist society of his day.
- Honest social reformers kept paying a price for striving to remove the evils staring us in the face.
- We have to change the hearts of men if we want to build a new world.
- It is not possible to build “new and better” world order in the builders do not change their hearts for the better.

New Testament Texts in keeping with the ideas of the Parable

Note

There are no texts bearing directly on the theme of the parable. We can only comment on some of them to strengthen the points made in the parable.

(1) Jesus Begins His Ministry

Mt	4/17	The Kingdom of Heaven is near.
Lk	4/16-30	The commission given to him: Preach the Good News to the Poor- Proclaim liberty to captives—Set free the oppressed—Announce the Salvation of God.
Mt	5/1-11	The Beatitudes. A change of heart and of values is wanted.
Mt	Chpts. 5,6,7	The Sermon on the Mount. Jesus proposes a new way of looking at life, at people and things. A radical change.

(2) John the Baptist's Preaching

Mt	3/1-12	The Kingdom of heaven is near.
Lk	3/1-18	Urgency of the task. Change your hearts. Radical change.