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EDITORIAL

In the first article of our September issue, a native African missionary, Fr ROGATH KIMARYO, CSSp, presents some critical reflections on how the mentality of dependency on outside help continues to have a paralysing effect on African communities. —

In April, SEDOS organised an activity on the situation in the Middle East. Mr AFIF SAFIEH, the Palestinian General Delegate to the UK and Director of the Office of Representation of the PLO to the Holy See, showed us what a serious strain the once hopeful peace process is under. —

Fr EUGÈNE JUGUET, MEP, for many years a missionary in Japan, presents a really enlightening article on the urgent need for liberation from that new totalitarianism called 'liberté du marché'. —

Fr JAMES KROEGER, MM, offers a few pages which are of especial interest to Asian readers. He resumes the highlights of the first international gathering of the Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life (SALs) which are native to or working in Asia. —

Fr JOHN MANSFORD PRIOR, SVD, based on his long missionary and teaching experience in Indonesia formulates possibilities for a deeper inculturation of Christian faith and liturgy. —

JOSEPH HANLON's contribution briefly reviews the case of South Africa to show the need for a real "JUBILEE 2000" debt release, a debt incurred by *apartheid* which also keeps the Mandela Government prisoner. —

On the occasion of the last G-7 meeting in June in the US, a RELIGIOUS WORKING GROUP on the World Bank and the IMF elaborated some *moral imperatives* for structural adjustment and economic measures. —

BOOKS

Baum, Gregory, and Harold Wells, eds.,
The Reconciliation of Peoples,
Challenge to the Churches,
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Duraisingh, Christopher, ed.
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WCC Publications, 1997.

Jones, Marge, and E. Grant Jones,
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Challenges and Hopes for a New Millennium,
WCC Publications, 1997.

Strahm, Doris,
Die Christusbilder der Frauen,
Christologie aus der Sicht von Frauen in Asien,
Afrika und Lateinamerika,
Edition Exodus.

Tschuy, Theo,
Ethnic Conflict and Religion,
Challenge to the Churches,
WCC Publications 1997.

NOTE:

In our April issue we published an article by Ben Simmes: "CREDIT TO THE POOR". The article presented the services of EDCS (Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society). Many have asked us for the address of the organisation in the Netherlands:

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A CALL TO AFRICA TO SHAKE OFF THE DEPENDENT SYNDROME

Rogath Kimaryo, CSSp.

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INTRODUCTION

A group of Third-World priest students in Rome, including the author, paid a study tour to the world's headquarters of Church funding agencies in Aachen, Germany. We visited, among other places, the offices of *Misereor*, *Missio* and *Kinder Missionswerk* where they explained the main sources of their funds to us, the philosophy behind the giving of grants and the modalities for making applications. We were told that most of the funds come from church taxes, free donations and the Bishop's Lenten and Christmas charity campaigns.

These funding organisations receive thousands of applications, mostly from the Third World *partners*, every year. A partner may be a Diocese, a circumscription of a religious institute or other juridical persons such as NGO's dedicated to the dignity of the human person and the promotion of the social order. Given the bulk of applications the funding agencies receive annually, the funds are overstretched. This reality was put to us rather bluntly as follows, "Today there is *donor-fatigue* in Europe and you (to us) must find ways in which you can support your young churches".

This article is, therefore, a result of my reflections after that amicable visit and the exchanges with the authorities of *Misereor* and *Missio*, in particular. I have been forced to ask the following question: Have the funds which the Church in Africa has been receiving over the years done it any good or have they merely brain-washed it and helped to keep it more dependent?

A CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH IN AFRICA TO BE SELF-SUPPORTING

Most of the local churches in Africa mainly survive on donations from overseas. This dependent syndrome is even worse in religious congregations where African circumscriptions rely almost wholly on the allocations from their general administration in Rome and other charity organisations. It is not a secret, for instance, that in my own province of East Africa of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers, 99.9 per cent of our annual budget-income comes from overseas donations. Such a dependence on European and North American donations makes one fear for the future of the Church in Africa to the point of asking: "How long will African Christians continue to be at the receiving end? Don't the Scriptures say that there is more happiness in giving than in receiving? Then why are people in Africa comfortable with only receiving?"

The dependent mentality, according to my experience in Kenya where I served for some years, is more predominant among Catholics than the other Christian denominations and the various Christian Sects which are quite different and better informed of their responsibilities.

Given this situation of dependence I cannot help questioning the wisdom of the expatriate missionaries who continue dishing out funds from home countries even to places where the Church is fully established. Isn't it a way of making people passive recipients and perpetuating the negative image of Africa by the Western media which presents Africans as poor, shabby, emaciated and hungry looking? These media hardly speak of the good aspects of the African continent. It, however, appears as though Africans have also accepted such a negative image, so much so that it has destroyed their self-confidence to the extent of making them underestimate their abilities.

A good number of Dioceses in the East African region could support themselves if they were to be sincere and realistic. But it is, perhaps, easier for Bishops and religious superiors to sit down and plan for projects and make applications to *Misereor*, *Missio* or *Kirche in Not, Adveniat, Oxfam*, etc. than to mobilise their people and create missionary awareness in them. No doubt, Christians are capable of making significant contributions towards supporting their own, as well as the nearby churches.

It is important to note here that true and estimable charity is not found in the continuous giving of fish to a hungry person, but in teaching him/her how to fish. This will give him/her the necessary techniques and the required implements for fishing. Once he/she knows how to fish, then he/she will have no need for charity-fish. This should be the spirit and philosophy underlying the giving of grants because permanent *hand-outs* tend to impoverish and brain-wash the one receiving and block his/her faculty of thinking.

THE CHURCH IN AFRICA REACHES ADULthood

In his Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, Pope John Paul II affirms the Church in Africa as follows:

“The Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops was an historic moment of grace: the Lord visited His people in Africa. Indeed, this continent is today experiencing what we call a sign of the times, an acceptable time, a day of salvation. It seems that the ‘hour of Africa’ has come, a favourable time ...” (*Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 6).

The Pope’s expressions: “historical moment of grace”, “a sign of the times”, “an acceptable time” and “hour of Africa” indicate his conviction that the Synod was a golden opportunity for Africa. It was an opportune moment for Christians throughout the continent to embrace the liberating message of the Gospel. If allowed to take root in people’s hearts, the Good News of Jesus Christ will set them free from poverty, hunger, illiteracy, sickness and other human-made problems. This is, therefore, the

favoured time to re-construct the disfigured image of Africa by interpreting the signs of the times and listening to what the Spirit is communicating through this historical moment. Failure to do this might lead to the present Church dying and disappearing in the same way the Post-Apostolic North African Church and the 15th and 16th centuries Portuguese evangelisation in sub-Saharan Africa did.

The celebration of the *Special Assembly for*

After Ordination, the new priest climbs a step high up on the social ladder. He is expected to join a special mystery clan and so becomes a mystery himself, even to his own family. To most people, how priests get their income and survive economically is not clear and some of them, including seminarians in major seminaries and newly ordained priests think that priests, are paid by the Pope or by some organisation in the Vatican.

Africa of the Synod of Bishops was, among other things, a sign of maturity. It meant that the Church in Africa had come of age. From then onwards it was not supposed to be regarded as a *young Church* as had often been the case. It had now become adult; a stage which, in traditional African society, was normally entered after circumcision. The convocation and the joyous celebration of the Synod was, therefore, a celebration of circumcision for the Church in Africa. It had

attained adulthood and was expected to make its contribution to the universal Church’s mission of evangelisation and be a sign of hope for humankind.

The Holy Father often refers to the Churches of Africa, Asia and Latin America as the “hope” of the Church so the question Christians in Africa have to address themselves to is: “What contribution does the Church in Africa make towards this “hope” of the universal Church?” The answer cannot be found in one or two aspects, but it should include the entire Christian attitude towards life, reflected in people’s ability to generously build their home by themselves.

A CALL FOR CHANGE OF ATTITUDE AMONG CATHOLICS IN AFRICA

Generosity, community living and sharing are African as well as Gospel values. But, they do not seem to be visible within the local churches, prompting the question: What has gone wrong? Something, which cannot be simply explained by reasons of poverty, must have gone wrong because even among the poor there exists a lot of sharing. Experience has shown that even in Europe and North America the people who contribute most to the charitable organisations are not the rich, but those who have the minimum.

The problem, I think, lies in what I would call, a *deformed mentality*. Christians in Africa have been receiving hand-outs from outside, especially from missionaries for so long that the image they have of a White missionary is that of someone who has everything and is autonomous. He (priest) or she (nun) can build church structures, schools, hospitals, dispensaries and social centres for the local people without their contribution as long as they embrace his/her religion and believe in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the One who founded it and the One Triune God. The missionaries will take care of their material needs. Is there any wonder, therefore, that the Church and its structures have remained a *foreign* institution in Africa up to this day and Africans continue to be strangers to it? This is an unfortunate and sad situation after almost a century of evangelisation in many parts of the continent. The next step after the African Synod should be to *marry* the Church with the African cultures.

The dependent mentality, according to my experience in Kenya where I served for some years, is more predominant among Catholics than the other Christian denominations and the various Christian Sects which are quite different and better informed of their responsibilities. The bigger groups such as the African Inland Church (AIC) Church Province of Kenya (CPK) and especially the Pentecostal and other independent Churches sacrifice a lot in order to build their places of worship, dispensaries and social centres. Their structures are, of course, not as big and as beautiful as the Catholic ones, but, nevertheless, it is the fruit of their energies and sacrifices. They have a right to feel proud of their achievements, no matter how small.

It takes years to change an attitude which has almost become a philosophy of life. This must come from within as it requires some sacrifices on the part of those involved. The agents of change in any society are the pastors, but unfortunately these are themselves a product of the receiving mentality. One of their great handicaps is that they have become foreign to their own people. After Ordination, the new priest climbs a step high up on the social ladder. He is expected to join a special *mystery* clan and so becomes a mystery himself, even to his own family. To most people, how priests get their income and survive economically is not clear and some of them, including seminarians in major seminaries and newly

ordained priests think that priests, are paid by the Pope or by some organisation in the Vatican.

There is need to stress to the people that priests are not a different breed. As a matter of fact, they are ordained for service. They are like the high priests chosen from their own people and appointed to act on behalf of God by offering gifts and sacrifices for sins (cf. Heb 5:1). Their ordination to the priesthood should not make them different from their fellow Christians (except for the role they play).

However, the challenge is for them to free themselves from this *special-breed* mentality and assume their true role of service. In this way,

they will not remain strangers to their own people and *vice versa*. There ought to be a point of convergence between the two. For this to happen, the seminary training must be modified. Directors and other formators have to be trained on the African approach to training. In spite of the universal principles, of which the Church in Africa must not lose sight, there is need to encourage the teaching of African philosophy, cultures, poetry, music, morality, ethics and customary laws in the seminary in order to prepare priests who will be competent to serve their own people wholeheartedly.

MAJOR TASKS AHEAD FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

i) Inculturation

According to the African Synod, inculturation is the meeting point between culture and faith. It ought to be a priority in evangelisation because it is necessary for rooting the Gospel in Africa (*Propositio*, n. 29). In and through it *catechesis* has taken flesh in various cultures (Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, n. 53). True inculturation must be based on a correct, generous and constructive mentality. It is the option to live the Gospel as Africans, with African values and world-view. Pope John Paul II once said, "A faith that does not become culture is not fully accepted, not entirely thought out, not faithfully lived" (*Insegnamenti* V/1 (1982), p. 131). This is the "hour for Africa" to evangelise itself and open its horizons to the *Ad extra* evangelisation.

I have been forced to ask the following question: Have the funds which the Church in Africa has been receiving over the years done it any good or have they merely brain-washed it and helped to keep it more dependent?

ii) *Speaking up for the voiceless*

Since the *Second Vatican Council*, the Church has forcefully engaged in the socio-political and economic problems hindering humankind from being truly the image and likeness of God. As stated in *Gaudium et Spes*, “The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well...” (n. 1). Consequently, the Church in Africa cannot be at the service of the people of this continent without being interested in the socio-economic and political problems affecting the daily life of Christians and the followers of the other confessions.

For the past few years, *justice and peace* has been a main theme in the Church’s social teaching. It was the theme for discussion in 1980 during the Synod of Bishops and a sub-theme during the *Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops*. This shows that the Church will not keep quiet when God’s people particularly, the poor and the weak, the refugees and displaced are suffering and deprived of their basic human rights and the dignity of having a home. In his article, “Violence and State Security in Africa: A Sociological Analysis”, which was published in *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, Vol. 7:1-2, 1995, p. 5, A. Ebbuley laments Africa’s pathetic situation as follows:

The current African situation, beset by conflicts and violence, is drawing attention all over the world. It is no good news! It is turmoil, communal conflict and violence, hatred and malicious actions towards ethnic groups in the same nation-State. There are institutionalised divisions, deep-rooted enmity between ethnic groups, religious sects and belief-systems. These have flared up in conflagration which are wreaking havoc on the innocent lives, sowing death and destruction on citizens and bringing economic ruin. Millions of people have fled and continue to flee their homes across national borders. Mass immigration has resulted in overcrowded and cholera-ridden refugee camps where people die pathetically from apocalyptic diseases and plagues. Most of these are fleeing wars and government repression ...

The Church in Africa must continue to exercise its prophetic role and be the “voice of the voiceless” (cf. *Propositio*, n. 45; *Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 70). It is a very important task, which must be accomplished

through the collaboration of each and everybody as the universal Church prepares for the third millennium. Archbishop Jaime Pedro Gonçalves of Beira, Mozambique in his intervention during the African Synod said, “Africa in the year 2000 will undergo many changes, it will write new pages in its history and will discover new facets of its identity” (*New People Magazine*, 9 March 1995, p. 16). Will the Church in Africa live up to that challenge?

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THE PEACE PROCESS: FROM BREAKTHROUGH TO BREAKDOWN?

Afif Safieh

*The Palestinian General Delegate to the UK
Director of the Office of Representation of the
P.L.O. to the Holy See*

The conference was given at the SEDOS Seminar on Tuesday, 22 April 1997, in Rome.

Deciding on titles for lectures is an interesting and intriguing affair. Speaking at M.I.T. in 1986, at a moment of diplomatic stagnation, the title I gave to my talk then was: “Dead ends?”. A friend later told me that the question mark after *dead ends* was my only concession to optimism. Years later, in May 1994, lecturing in California at the invitation of the World Affairs Council, I opted for: “Palestine: A State in the Making?” and then the question mark seemed as my only reluctant concession to pessimism.

During the Napoleonic wars which devastated Continental Europe, the Swiss had a wise saying: “Les peuples heureux n’ont pas d’Histoire”, “Happy Peoples Have No History”. Well in Palestine/Israel, both peoples concerned are blessed or burdened and plagued with too much history. I still remember when Fukuyama wrote his article and then published the book: “The End of history”, André Fontaine, the editor-in-chief of *Le Monde* in Paris, wrote in his regular column: “if we really live the end of history, then we are witnessing the beginning of boredom”. Bearing in mind that “may you live in interesting times” is a curse in China, you can imagine how often and how hard we sometimes yearn for a ... boring moment.

Chou-en-lai, China’s Prime Minister for decades, was extremely worried by the then widely acclaimed *détente* of the late sixties/early seventies. He feared both American-Soviet collusion but also American-Soviet collusion that might result in a world condominium. In his own inimitable way, he, the *blasé* statesman would warn: “*détente* is like a bed but where each makes a different dream”. Today the same could be said of the Middle East peace process. Everybody is in favour of peace of course. Majorities in each constituency support the peace process, but, like in Chou-En-lai’s *détente*, each player has a different finality in mind, where visions for end-results

are competing and incompatible and the dreams of one side can be a nightmare for others.

When Labour was still in power in Israel, I often repeated that it seemed to me that in this peace process, we, the Palestinians, were interested in peace but that the Israeli side seemed more interested in the process itself. Today, with Netanyahu and the Likud presiding over an extreme right wing coalition, I believe that we neither have peace nor do we have a process anymore.

Let me retrace briefly important landmarks. After the end of the Gulf War in 1991, the U.S.A. could not remain inactive towards what former British Secretary of State Douglas Hurd had called the “unfinished business”, namely the unresolved Israeli-Arab conflict.

From March up to October, 1991, Secretary of State James Baker undertook multiple trips to the area in what I called then negotiating pre-negotiations leading to pre-negotiating negotiations. It was an exercise of shuttle diplomacy dealing with talks about talks about ... talks.

Years earlier, both at the think tank in Washington close to the Israeli lobby AIPAC and in the American magazine *Commentary*, abundant literature on conflict resolution in the Middle East was produced with the following recommendations emphasised: 1) With the decline of the Soviet Union and of Communism, Islam and fundamentalism were the new global threat and in those new changing realities, Israel maintains an Important strategic function as the regional ally; 2) The Palestinian question should not be given centrality in any quest for peace. The Arab countries should not be invited as a bloc to negotiate with Israel but as individual actors with different sets of priorities and concerns; 3) Israel should be enticed into a peace process by

carrots — normalisation with non-neighbouring Arab countries, economic dividends etc. — rather than the stick. Israel was to be encouraged by rewards rather than sanctions; 4) The UN and other third parties should have as limited a role as possible leaving the diplomatic outcome to emanate from the interaction of the local belligerent parties that would become negotiating partners. The inter-national ramifications of the conflict were to be sized down to regional proportions and, even further, to a local dimension.

The team around James Baker had all worked in that think tank — the Washington Institute for Near East Policies — and their motto was: “we should make an offer to Israel that it cannot reject”. So they simply adopted Israel’s preferred negotiating strategy and made it their own. The choreography of negotiations starting in Madrid at the end of October 1991 was to be extremely complex with multiple bilateral tracks coupled with several multilateral talks.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the Orient was literally disoriented. Advantage was to be made out of Arab disarray. Minimum levels of co-ordination were lacking and Israel did not hesitate to take advantage of the difficulty in synchronising positions and progress in the different tracks.

In any negotiation, the nature of the forum, the nature and the number the participants determines the possible outcome. Instead of an “International Conference” under UN auspices, we all were invited to a “Peace Conference” with the USA and the rapidly vanishing USSR as co-sponsors. The UN was expected to be and to remain a silent observer and the European Community, that hoped — and the Arabs supported that aspiration — to be a co-sponsor playing a decisive role in the birth of a future Middle Eastern constellation, was relegated to a financial-economic role on the margin of the geostrategic sphere kept jealously as the *domaine réservé* of the Americans.

As we all remember, the Palestinians were offered to be half a delegation, representing half the people and seeking half a solution. On the pretext that the Israeli Government would not negotiate with the P.L.O. and that it was also opposed to the emergence of a Palestinian State, the Palestinians were offered to sit in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The Palestinian participants were supposed to be recruited from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip only but no Jerusalem residents or Diaspora Palestinians or P.L.O. officials could be admitted in the negotiating room. The fact that it was the P.L.O. leadership which selected the Palestinian

negotiators and gave them legitimacy and instructions made former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban say: “Whether he likes it or not, Shamir is negotiating with the P.L.O., but he prefers to adopt the ostrich posture which is ... neither a comfortable nor an elegant posture”. By seeking half a solution I mean that, unlike the other tracks, we were expected to negotiate a five-year interim transitional period of Palestinian self- government on the road to final status.

The more difficult issues — Jerusalem, the refugees, the settlements, boundaries and sovereignty — were differed to a second phase starting no later than the beginning of the third year.

I have often described the Palestinian attitude then as being unreasonably reasonable and that not only because we are angelic but because peace, and peace now, corresponds to our enlightened national interest. Any loss of time is extremely detrimental for us. We are the ones whose land is being confiscated, whose water is being plundered, whose individuals are being deported, whose houses are being demolished, whose trees are being uprooted, whose universities and schools are being closed, whose economy is being strangled Yet we went to Madrid with great expectations in spite of all the flawed and humiliating conditions since we were led to believe that this was the only game in town. From March to October 1991, we carried all the burden of momentum, all the burden of flexibility, because we wanted to give peace a chance hoping that Madrid would trigger a snowball process.

On the other hand, Israeli Prime Minister Shamir had to be dragged reluctantly and grudgingly to the negotiating table. He had difficulties understanding and adhering to the principles of “land for peace” the basis and foundation of the entire exercise and his political “generosity” and “magnanimity” never went beyond offering “peace for ... peace” and the perpetuation of the territorial *status quo*. In Madrid he looked as though he had been ambushed and trapped. He sounded anachronistic and out of place. Months later, in June 1992, Madrid resulted in the electoral Waterloo for Shamir who, back in opposition, admitted and confessed that he intended to play delaying tactics at the negotiating table for ten years while accelerating settlement-building and accomplished facts on the ground creating thus an irreversible situation that even the peace process would not overcome.

From Madrid, the bilateral talks moved to Washington and the multilateral talks (arms control, economic development and integration, water, en-

vironment and refugees) literally to the four corners of the world. In Washington, resorting to “corridor diplomacy”, the Palestinian team succeeded in imposing an Israeli recognition of the gradual decoupling of the Jordanian and Palestinian tracks while the composition of the different layers of the Palestinian team — P.L.O. co-ordinators, Diaspora advisors, Jerusalem spokespersons — reflected more and more the different categories of Palestinians that Israel wanted to see excluded.

But in Washington, the talks quickly stagnated and the change of Israeli Government, from Likud to Labour, did nothing to reinvigorate them. The head of the Israeli negotiating team was confirmed in his functions signalling more continuity rather than change and Israel amused itself, but not the others, by sometimes giving the semblance of an impression that it might shift the emphasis from the Palestinian to the Syrian track or back to the Palestinian without any tangible achievement anywhere.

In the meantime the level of support among public opinions started to be seriously eroded. In Palestine, on their return from Madrid, the Palestinian team were welcomed by massive and spontaneous demonstrations where a new subversive weapon — the olive branch — was brandished proudly. But, by now, disenchantment and scepticism prevailed and radicalism was again on the ascendancy.

It is at this juncture that a secret channel was opened in Oslo by the Israeli Government and the P.L.O. and when, in August 1993 the breakthrough was announced, it took almost everybody by surprise including the official negotiators in Washington. I keep saying, maybe impertinently, that if the Oslo channel has not yet fully put Palestine on the map, it has put ... Norway on the map. I usually offer this thought as an additional incentive to third parties with a potential for a decisive role in peacemaking.

The Declaration of Principles agreed upon in Oslo was signed on the White House lawn on 13 September 1993, with the world as witness. Even the reluctant hand extended by Rabin after an encouraging nod from Clinton to Arafat's enthusiastic availability did not ruin the mood or alter the general perception that History was in the making. It must be said here that Israel was finally negotiating with the Palestinian National Movement as such representing the totality of the people as an indivisible unit.

Yet the magic, the spell, the charm were of short duration. Again at the negotiating table in Taba, the Palestinians were stunned to discover that Israel

intended to keep 40% of the Gaza Strip during the interim period. After laborious negotiations only 28% remained under Israel's exclusive control and those were 28% too many knowing the Palestinian need for every single square inch in over-crowded Gaza. Also the Israelis interpreted the “Jericho area” to withdraw from as close as possible to the city limits far beneath Palestinian expectations for freeing the “Jericho province”. Again “constructive ambiguities” in diplomacy proved to be a dangerous recipe.

Israel should be aware that redeployment out of Gaza was a Palestinian gift to Israel, and not the other way round bearing in mind how unmanageable Gaza was for the occupying authorities. For the Palestinians, the test of Oslo, the credibility and the believability of Oslo resided in further redeployment in the West Bank. If the process became static, the very pillars of its legitimacy would be seriously shaken. Yet Rabin was in no hurry repeating that “dates are not sacred” even though in the often unsatisfactory Oslo agreement, the only precise area was the calendar of events. I believed and often repeated then that “a territory that was occupied in 1967 in less than 6 days, could be also evacuated in less than 6 days so that Mr Rabin could rest on the 7th”.

The assassination of Rabin by a fanatic right winger sent shock waves through Israeli society. Peres, his successor, decided to move fast towards redeployment from the urban centres of the West Bank so that the Palestinians could go ahead with their presidential and legislative elections. Yasser Arafat had in the meantime obtained from the Islamic tendencies, through persuasion and also better control, several months of an unproclaimed cease-fire. During this period, it was the Israeli Government and their secret services who were provoking the Islamists and not the Islamists provoking Israel. Dr Fathi Shikaki, leader of Islamic Jihad was assassinated in Malta in October 1995 and Yehya Ayyash was exploded by telephone in Gaza early in January 1996 in the midst of Palestinian territory and election campaign.

Retaliation was to be predicted and, as expected, happened in March 1996 both in West Jerusalem and in Tel Aviv. Israel immediately resorted to its customary policy of closures and collective punishments that totally crippled Palestinian society and suffocated Palestinian economy. The date of Israeli elections having been already advanced to May 1996, Peres decided to out-Likud Likud in his campaign message to the extent that observers commented that “with a dove like that who needs hawks, with a left like that who needs a right?” He even waged an un-

necessary war on Lebanon and then succeeded in ... failing again in the Keneset elections.

Today, there is a tendency to view the Labour-led era with nostalgia. In a way, this is simply the prolongation of the undeserved praise and positive media coverage Labour usually got, whether right or wrong. History will record that, when Netanyahu assumed power, the Palestinian side already had 34 legitimate grievances on agreed upon issues that were left unimplemented during the interim period: freedom of movement for people and products, the management of the passages towards Jordan and Egypt, and through them to our Arab hinterland, the free passage — the corridor — linking the Gaza Strip to the West Bank, the port, the airport, the freeze on settlement building ... But now Netanyahu, carried away by his victory, his ideological inclinations, his demagogic promises and a successful first trip to Washington, where Senators and Congressmen shamelessly gave him several standing ovations, simply declared war on the Peace Process which he views as the continuation of war but by ... other means. The battle for Jerusalem was immediately waged, first with the opening of a controversial tunnel then by the bulldozers in Jabal Abu Ghoniem. The mounting pressures, local and international, resulting from the “tunnel crisis” forced Netanyahu to implement an 80% redeployment in Hebron city. This was applauded, maybe too enthusiastically, as an indication that the pragmatic Netanyahu was prevailing on his more ideological nature. For the first time Likud negotiated with the P.L.O. and Likud was seen withdrawing within the West Bank. That victory was short-lived since he immediately rewarded or compensated his indispensable extreme right wing coalition partners with bulldozers in Jabal Abu Ghoniem. The “settlement” there would be innocently repackaged as a “suburb”. A week earlier, few Israelis had ever heard of “Har Homa”. Now, abandoning the site became equivalent to “national suicide”.

I personally believe that, had Labour been in power, we would also have had a deadlocked situation. We have now finally reached the moment of truth: final status issues and the gaps, if the parties are left to themselves, are simply unbridgeable.

In spite of all the diplomatic agitation, the local parties are left to themselves. And the overwhelming military superiority Israel enjoys encourages its insatiable appetite making impossible an acceptable compromise. In the absence of decisive external input by third parties, this process is doomed to failure. Yes, it is true, the European Union have nominated a special envoy, yet his mediating efforts

need a clearer mandate and, surely, more muscle. In the meantime, the Russians were busy managing their decline and occupied in occupying Chechnya. Warren Christopher and/or Dennis Ross, though frequent visitors to the area, project the image of messengers with no message. The USA, a superpower all over the globe, seems to have abdicated this particular role in the Middle East in favour of its regional ally Israel. The American Congress is even more supportive of Israeli extravagance than the Keneset itself validating the perception of “Capitol Hill as that other Israeli-occupied territory that needs to be liberated” if we are to have a successful peace process.

American decision makers, but also other Western capitals, better realise soon, that unlike the fifties, the sixties and the seventies when Israel marketed itself as a bastion against militant Arab nationalism, Israeli intransigence today defies, destabilises and delegitimises a profoundly pro-Western Arab regional State-system. In this context, is Israel a strategic asset or a liability? Awaiting the storm that will inevitably come, one wonders whether there is a convergence or rather a divergence and a bifurcation between Israeli ambitions and Western interests.

Years ago, during another depressing moment, a joke was fashionable in certain circles. Brejnev and Reagan went to see God and asked him whether there will be *détente* between their respective countries. God, it seems, said: “yes, but not during your lifetime”. Yasser Arafat heard about it and rushed to see God and asked: “God, God Almighty, will there ever be peace in Palestine”? According to reliable sources, God looked melancholically at Arafat and said: “Yes, yes, of course, but not during My lifetime”.

I am sure God would not mind being proven wrong on this one.

POUR UNE THÉOLOGIE DE LA LIBÉRATION DU «MONDE LIBRE»

Eugène Juguet, MEP

Eh bien non, nous n'en avons pas fini avec les idéologies! L'économie libérale, dominante, triomphante, à prétention «scientifique» - comme jadis l'idéologie marxiste - est loin d'être exempte de présupposés discutables. Le libéralisme économique est une idéologie, qui exige une soumission inconditionnelle à ses lois, au mépris - affiché sans complexe - des aspirations humaines à la justice et à la fraternité.

Le temps est donc venu d'élaborer une théologie de la libération du «monde libre»! En voici une esquisse. Eugène Juguet, prêtre des Missions étrangères de Paris, vit depuis de nombreuses années au Japon. Un bon observatoire, en cet «Orient extrême» qui attire aujourd'hui tous les regards, pour déceler les effets et les méfaits de la croissance à tout prix et du «consumérisme» érigé en système. Auteur, en 1992, d'un essai paru chez Karthala sur «Le prix de la liberté», Eugène Juguet reprend ses thèses essentielles, à contre-courant de la logique libérale. Non pour nier les avantages du développement économique et social, c'est évident, mais pour les plier aux impératifs de la personne, des communautés, des cultures et des spiritualités locales.

La mondialisation tend à imposer une «dépendance mutuelle». L'objectif est de rénover les rapports sociaux dans la perspective d'une société solidaire. Ce but, dans la perspective esquissée par Eugène Juguet, s'appuie sur la liberté chrétienne. Selon l'Évangile, la liberté est orientée, ouverte vers l'autre, constitutive d'un monde non seulement plus riche, mais plus juste, véritablement nouveau. «Réussirons-nous?», se demande l'auteur. La Croix aussi a fécondé l'Histoire. Aucun échec ne justifierait le refus d'essayer.

Albert Longchamp

Qui parle, aujourd'hui encore, de «théologie de la libération»? Elaborée en Amérique latine à une époque où, dans des pays comme le Pérou et le Brésil, paysans sans terre et pauvres des bidonvilles s'organisaient en «communautés de base» pour lutter contre l'oppression et l'injustice qui les accablent, cette théologie peine à survivre à l'effondrement du monde communiste et au discrédit du socialisme militant (L'Église elle-même se tait. Alors que les hommes, les pauvres surtout, sont de plus en plus asservis, pourquoi ne plaide-t-elle pas vigoureusement la cause de leur libération? Par crainte de cautionner un «terrorisme» que les Grands ne cessent de condamner violemment? Mais le terrorisme qu'exerce leur politique économique n'est-il pas encore beaucoup plus destructeur?).

En effet, souvent soupçonnés de flirter avec le communisme, ses initiateurs se référaient explicitement au modèle socialiste de développement. Privée aujourd'hui de cette référence, c'est la libération elle-même qui semble être devenue sans objet. La chute du mur de Berlin a symbolisé la fin d'un monde divisé en deux où s'affrontaient sans merci les idéologies libérale et communiste. Seul demeure un libéralisme économique triomphant, dont les chantages assurent que, devenant «global» («mondial»), il peut concilier, avec la liberté pour tous, le maximum de justice réalisable pour chacun.

TOTALITARISME LIBÉRAL

En fait, que se passe-t-il aujourd'hui? Il est de jour en jour plus évident qu'inégalités, injustices et violences se multiplient partout, y compris dans les pays dits «les plus développés» où il est devenu inconvenant de parler de «justice sociale». Mais ce n'est pas tout: quelle liberté y reste-t-il, sinon celle de choisir entre les multiples objets offerts à la consommation? Liberté assortie, bien sûr, de la stricte obligation de consommer toujours davantage.

Peut-être objectera-t-on: «*Mais regardez les Etats-Unis d'Amérique?*» Ce pays ne vient-il pas d'opérer un remarquable redressement économique qui a assuré la réélection du Président Clinton? Et cette reprise n'est-elle pas susceptible d'entraîner dans son sillage l'ensemble de l'économie mondiale?

On évite ici de dire aux dépens de qui la reprise s'est faite. En Amérique même, la «cassure sociale» ne fait que s'accroître entre «ceux qui ont» et «ceux qui n'ont pas». Parmi ceux-ci, les Noirs, les Latino-Américains d'origine et les travailleurs sont toujours plus nombreux. Et comment passer sous silence les conséquences pour les pauvres du monde entier de la politique des États-Unis? Ceux-ci visent à imposer partout une «liberté du marché» qui profite d'abord à leur propre commerce, grâce, entre autres,

à une exploitation devenue sans frein des pays les moins «compétitifs».

Cependant, le modèle de «développement» que les pays les plus riches veulent imposer à tous les autres, à quoi a-t-il abouti dans leurs propres sociétés? Non seulement elles se cassent en deux, multipliant les «exclus» en leur sein, mais elles vont s'émiettant tou-jours plus. Finalement con-finé dans sa tâche de producteur-consommateur, chacun s'y retrouve seul, sans plus rien qui le relie vitalement aux autres. Vivre y perd sens et goût, à la fois pour les individus, souvent réduits à l'état de robots sans existence personnelle, et pour les collectivités où une compétition forcenée sans autre fin que l'argent détruit toute forme de solidarité.

Le doute est de moins en moins permis: l'impasse dans laquelle s'enfonce aujourd'hui l'humanité, jusqu'à compromettre irrémédiablement son avenir, est due avant tout à la structure même du système libéral dans lequel nous nous sommes laissés enfermer (Ce système, en voie de «globalisation», parce qu'il se propose d'imposer partout un unique modèle de société, commence à susciter non seulement la critique radicale de beaucoup d'intellectuels (tels, au Japon, Ooè Kensaburô, prix Nobel de littérature, et, en Allemagne, son correspondant et ami Gunther Grass), mais aussi de vastes mouvements populaires de refus (ainsi celui des Zapatistes au Mexique).

FIN D'HISTOIRE

Comment sortir de cette impasse? Tel est le problème crucial auquel, dans son ensemble, l'humanité se trouve désormais confrontée. Les politiques que, bon gré mal gré, les gouvernants appliquent partout aujourd'hui ne sortent pas des cadres «obligés» d'un néolibéralisme destructeur de la nature, de la vie et de l'homme lui-même. Comment, dès lors, s'étonner que le divorce se creuse d'une manière irrémédiable entre les partis politiques au pouvoir et un nombre grandissant de citoyens qui sentent confusément qu'on se trompe de route, qu'il faut «faire du neuf»... Le drame est que, pour le moment, aucune solution ne semble paraître à l'horizon (D'où une sorte de malaise indéfinissable qui

tend à se répandre dans nos sociétés, surtout parmi les jeunes, très sensible aujourd'hui au Japon.).

Pourquoi?

Notons tout d'abord ce qui continue à séduire dans le libéralisme. En premier lieu, son principe de base: la libre compétition. Présentée et perçue comme «naturelle» à l'homme, elle condamne le socialisme autoritaire qui, l'histoire du communisme le montre, brise là un ressort essentiel à l'activité humaine.

En second lieu: si le marxisme est bien une «idéo-logie» projetée sur le réel et non une science comme il le prétend, l'économie libérale, elle, se présente - et apparaît encore comme une science incontournable, sans arrière-fond idéologique. Ses leçons peuvent être difficiles à supporter: il faut s'y soumettre si on veut éviter de «revenir en arrière» et continuer à suivre la voie du «progrès».

Dès lors, faut-il conclure que le souci de la justice et de la solidarité, est, lui, contraire à la «nature» de l'homme? Que nous en avons «fini» avec les idéologies? Science stricte, l'économie libérale ne reposerait sur aucun présupposé discutable concernant l'homme et le monde dans lequel il vit?

En réalité, l'homme-objet dont traite la science économique contemporaine (néolibéralisme) ne se trouve-t-il pas arbitrairement amputé de sa dimension spirituelle? Ainsi, comment expliquer son refus de prendre en compte le souci de la justice et de la solidarité? N'est-ce pas parce que ce souci renvoie à une intériorité, à une liberté constitutive du sujet humain? Il est hors de question que le libéralisme reconnaisse à l'homme le pouvoir de se dresser contre l'ordre «inhumain» qu'il prétend lui imposer au nom de l'objectivité: celle des sciences et des technologies.

Nous nous heurtons ici de plein fouet à ce qu'il faut bien appeler «l'idéologie libérale». Ne pouvant pas ignorer totalement les aspirations à la justice et à la fraternité, les pontifes du libéralisme osent prétendre que, seule, une soumission inconditionnelle à ses lois peut y satisfaire, fût-ce très imparfaitement! La poursuite sans frein des

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intérêts privés s'y concilierait au mieux avec les exigences du bien commun. Comment? Sauf à évoquer - invoquer? - l'intervention d'une mystérieuse «main invisible», pas de réponse...

Idéologique aussi est la conception que se font les économistes libéraux de leur science elle-même. Celle-ci leur assurerait une compétence exclusive en matière d'économie. Attitude qui renvoie d'ailleurs à une mentalité qui a longtemps prévalu concernant l'ensemble des sciences et de leurs applications: on les a crues seules capables d'apporter une réponse juste aux différents problèmes de l'homme (Cf. le livre déjà ancien (1968) de Jürgen Habermas: *La technique et la science comme «idéologie»* (traduction française aux Editions Gallimard, 1973)).

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Cependant, il faut reconnaître que nous payons très cher, à l'heure actuelle, le fait d'avoir si longtemps accordé une confiance totale au système libéral, comme d'autres croyaient à la pérennité du système communiste. S'en remettre au «système» est devenu un comportement si fort enraciné dans l'esprit de l'homme moderne que, si on parle de la nécessité de sortir du libéralisme, la réaction jaillit aussitôt: *«Mais quel autre système avez-vous à proposer?»*

C'est ici, à mon sens, que nous sommes conduits à prendre conscience que nous vivons la fin d'une époque, que nous sommes parvenus à un tournant décisif de l'histoire de l'humanité.

Les systèmes ont fait leur temps. Expressions idéologisées des apports des sciences et des technologies, ils ne peuvent survivre à l'effondrement des idéologies qui les soutenaient et en justifiaient l'impérialisme. La fin du libéralisme risque de suivre de près celle du communisme. Si l'homme lui-même ne veut pas disparaître avec eux, il est urgent qu'il prenne en main sa propre destinée.

PROFITEURS ET EXCLUS

Ne nous y trompons pas: il ne s'agit pas de récuser les avantages dûs aux sciences et aux techniques. Mais, si les hommes veulent

éviter que, incontrôlé, le progrès de celles-ci ne se retourne définitivement contre eux, il leur faut, sans plus tarder, prendre les moyens de les plier à leur service, en refusant de se laisser dominer, «aliéner» par l'idéologie libérale du «progrès».

Pas davantage il ne saurait être question ici de s'opposer à la «mondialisation», sauf à sombrer dans une anarchie catastrophique pour tous. Les hommes et les peuples seront de plus en plus dépendants les uns des autres. Mais voici où le bât blesse: dans le monde libéral, cette dépendance mutuelle devient toujours plus écrasante pour les plus faibles et va jusqu'à produire un nombre grandissant d'«exclus». Cela, d'abord au profit d'une minorité d'individus qui, dans le champ financier avant tout, savent se placer habilement à l'endroit où ils peuvent manipuler le système à leur avantage.

Fin novembre 1996, on publiait cette information effarante: alors que dans les pays dits «développés» le chômage frappe déjà, en moyenne, 11% des travailleurs, la proportion des gens qui cherchent du travail sans en trouver serait d'une personne sur trois pour l'ensemble du monde (Selon une enquête de l'OIT parue dans la presse le 26 novembre 1996). Le remède à cette situation? Continuer à imposer partout un unique modèle de développement, le nôtre, tout entier centré sur la croissance industrielle? Comme si le libéralisme n'était pas le principal responsable, à l'échelle du monde, de la fracture sociale dont la plaie devient toujours plus béante.

Nous en sommes arrivés au point que se dessine une nouvelle figure du monde, désormais prédominante: non plus Est-Ouest ou même Nord-Sud. Mais, coupant en deux toutes les sociétés y compris les plus «avancées»: Profiteurs-Exclus.

La principale menace qui pèse désormais sur notre avenir n'est pas située à «l'extérieur», comme don-nent encore à le croire les dirigeants des pays les plus riches: elle est au cœur de chacune de nos sociétés. En ce sens aussi, la «globalisation» progresse. Et les pays «développés» se tromperaient lourdement en jugeant qu'ils sont eux-mêmes à l'abri des conflits internes qui déchirent tant de nations à travers le monde.

L'abcès est généralisé. S'il éclate d'abord dans des pays pauvres, là surtout où la colonisation a produit des États peu regardant aux différences ethniques, culturelles ou religieuses, sa source principale est à chercher dans la politique mondiale des pays «avancés». Politique qui, d'ailleurs, a déjà commencé à produire chez eux des conflits qui

s'apparentent à ceux qu'ils dénoncent chez les autres. Sans pouvoir, et pour cause, y apporter de remède efficace (Cette impuissance, ces dernières années, n'a cessé de se manifester au Moyen-Orient, en Afrique et, aujourd'hui au Pérou).

Si le système libéral finissant ne cède pas la place à une nouvelle organisation du monde, il en suivra un chaos inimaginable, désastreux pour l'humanité tout entière (Le reproche de «catastrophisme» est facile à faire ici. Ne s'agit-il pas, au contraire, de prendre conscience qu'il est urgent de tout faire pour, précisément, éviter la catastrophe?).

Dès lors se pose la question: qui va créer cette nécessaire nouvelle organisation?

Certainement pas les pouvoirs politiques actuellement en place, car ils ne sont que de purs produits du système actuel. En fait, la réalité même du pouvoir leur échappe de plus en plus, réduits qu'ils sont à n'être que des instruments entre les mains de ceux qui accaparent le pouvoir économique.

Pauvres citoyens qui croient encore à leur liberté de vote! «*Jeux sans enjeux*», a-t-on pu écrire à propos des dernières élections présidentielles en Amérique (Serge Halami, dans le Monde diplomatique de novembre 1996). Hélas! Ce n'est pas seulement aux États-Unis que, quel que soit le candidat élu, la politique suivie, elle, ne change pas.

C'est ainsi qu'un Indien, Mathias V. Rethinam, écrivait récemment: «*Les besoins immédiats de 85% de la population indienne - un revenu décent, des moyens de se nourrir, de s'habiller, de se loger, de s'éduquer, de se soigner et de recouvrer sa dignité - ne peuvent être satisfaits par les responsables politiques de ce pays qui continuent de se cramponner de manière inconditionnelle et aveugle aux nations soi-disant développées et à leurs puissantes institutions financières et politiques: OMC, Banque mondiale et FMI*» (D'un article, traduit de l'anglais, paru dans *Foi et développement*, revue du Centre Lebreton, octobre 1996: *Pour une nouvelle dynamique du développement*).

PRATIQUE DU DIALOGUE

La nouvelle organisation dont le monde a besoin ne peut se construire, progressivement, qu'à partir des initiatives que prennent aujourd'hui, à la base, toutes sortes d'associations dont l'action va à contre-courant de la

logique libérale: «croissance» à tout prix, consumérisme sans bornes, écrasement de toutes les identités, personnelles, communautaires, régionales, nationales, culturelles, spirituelles... Un seul modèle pour tous: l'«*American way of life*».

Les hommes, chacun personnellement et ensemble, à tous les niveaux de leur vie en société, ont besoin de s'assurer un maximum d'autonomie dans le cadre même de la mondialisation. A chacun de choisir son mode d'existence, nonobstant les appâts de la consommation. A chaque communauté, chaque nation surtout, la possibilité de définir, dans une large mesure, son type propre de développement.

A la liberté de plus en plus fantomatique dont s'enorgueillissent encore les démocraties libérales, il nous faut opposer une liberté - la nôtre - qui ose dire «non» aux impératifs du système qui nous aliène. Et, pour arriver à sortir d'une société mondiale de plus en plus structurée par les seuls rapports de force - celle de l'argent plus que celle de la compétence -, il nous faudra aussi retrouver le sens et la pratique perdus du dialogue.

En effet, l'apprentissage d'un vrai dialogue, d'égal à égal, entre toutes les communautés humaines, appelées à vivre désormais la mondialisation en cours dans une dépendance mutuelle grandissante, est devenu une question de vie ou de mort. Objectif: arriver ensemble à définir un droit international permettant à chaque peuple de faire reconnaître par les autres le type de développement le mieux approprié à ses besoins et à ses possibilités propres. Et cela, sans qu'il se trouve alors pénalisé dans le domaine des échanges qu'il souhaite continuer à entretenir avec les autres.

Une telle politique ne peut que susciter l'opposition de l'ensemble des profiteurs du système néo-libéral. On lui reprochera, entre autres, de mettre à la base du changement des structures du «monde libre», une sorte de «conversion», à la fois personnelle et communautaire, idéaliste et moralisante.

Il est vrai que, d'idéal et de morale il ne reste guère de trace dans les pratiques qui découlent du système libéral. Si on y insiste sur «*le respect des droits de l'homme*», c'est en passant sous silence tous ceux qui conduisent à contester radicalement le libéralisme. Celui-ci permet tout... en enlevant aux hommes et aux peuples jusqu'à la possibilité de s'affirmer et d'être eux-mêmes. Jusqu'à quand supporterons-nous cette mise à mort de l'homme?

Qu'on s'en prenne à un moralisme sermonneur ou à un idéalisme désincarné, d'accord. Mais ces excès ne sauraient justifier les excès d'un libéralisme totalitaire ou d'un matérialisme aveugle.

Seule une ouverture à l'Esprit peut permettre aux hommes de prendre au sérieux l'existence d'autrui et celle d'un droit sans lequel aucune vie commune entre eux n'est possible. Ouverture d'autant plus nécessaire aujourd'hui que la communauté humaine est à cons-truire à l'échelle planétaire.

On a trop oublié que l'homme est ensemble chair et esprit. Si on a raison de rejeter les multiples formes de «spiritualité-évasion», on ne peut pas non plus laisser la chair étouffer l'esprit. Et le renouveau spirituel devenu absolument nécessaire aujourd'hui pour assurer la survie même de l'humanité ne saurait réussir s'il ne débouche pas sur un renouveau de la morale, une morale commune à l'ensemble de l'humanité.

Il est, en effet, devenu évident que la libération dont nous avons besoin aujourd'hui intéresse tous les hommes, et qu'elle ne pourra se faire que dans la mesure où ils parviendront à s'entendre sur ses objectifs et, aussi, à unir leurs efforts pour la réaliser.

La foi elle-même en Jésus-Christ, quelle que soit la qualité de son apport propre, ne saurait être authentique si, en profondeur, elle ne rejoint pas l'expérience spirituelle et morale commune à tous les hommes «de foi». Reconnaissons-le: les baptisés, eux aussi, sont sans cesse menacés de se réfugier dans une spiritualité-évasion, coupée des réalités concrètes de la vie des hommes, si cures à assumer aujourd'hui.

S'OUVRIR OU SE FERMER A L'AUTRE?

Les hommes, ensemble, ont-ils réellement la possibilité de sortir de l'impasse néo-libérale dans laquelle, globalement, ils continuent de s'enfoncer à pas de plus en plus précipités? Certes, les analyses qui dénoncent vigoureusement les contradictions du système se multiplient, et on

insiste sur la nécessité où nous sommes d'en changer radicalement les structures. Mais ce qui continue désespérément à manquer, ce sont les propositions crédibles suscep-tibles d'ouvrir un chemin conduisant à la révolution souhaitée (Ce manque ne se fait-il pas cruellement sentir dans les manifestations populaires et dans les réactions d'intellectuels qui agitent l'Europe depuis la secousse sociale, motivée par les effets de la mondialisation, que la France a connue en fin d'année 1995?). Les vœux pieux ne sauraient suffire.

Une voie paraît aujourd'hui définitivement fermée: celle qui, pour mettre un terme à la violence libérale, opposerait une autre forme de violence, pouvant aller jusqu'à emprunter la force des armes. Telle est la plus importante leçon à tirer de l'effondrement du système soviétique. L'histoire récente du Pérou donne aussi à méditer. Le *Sentier lumineux* a, comme on sait, multiplié les actes de violence aberrants dans leur gratuité. Violence dans laquelle sombrent aujourd'hui beaucoup de pays, avec au terme le chaos.

Or, aujourd'hui, comment ne pas constater à peu près partout, non seulement l'effondrement en cours des systèmes traditionnels de valeurs, mais, beaucoup plus grave encore, une absence de plus en plus prononcée de véritable souci éthique. C'est ainsi que, dans l'ensemble des pays dits «les plus développés», les scandales financiers se multiplient.

On peut, dès lors, comprendre la réaction de l'ensemble de la population péruvienne à l'égard du coup de force du *Mouvement révolutionnaire Tupac Amaru*, si légitimes aient pu paraître ses revendications: il faut impérativement sortir du cercle sans fin de la violence (Hélas! Ce n'est pas la tuerie perpétrée le 23 avril par le Président Fujimori qui contribuera à rompre ce cercle.).

Cependant, la question reste entière de savoir comment.

Certes, on affirme que l'ensemble de l'Amérique latine a enfin pris la bonne voie: ceci en se fondant sur le fait que, dans la plupart des pays, les dictatures ont cédé la place à des régimes démocratiques, et que les guérillas sont arrivées à bout de souffle. Tout cela serait le fruit d'une croissance économique due aux «ajustements structurels» et à la globalisation du système néo-libéral.

Tout autre est la réalité. Un prêtre qui a été secrétaire de la Conférence épiscopale du Brésil, Ernanne Pinheiro, écrivait récemment:

«Notre population, appauvrie et religieuse, de tradition fataliste, en vient à se sentir de plus en plus impuissante devant l'avalanche de messages de pseudo-irréversibilité du processus de globalisation... Quelle espérance à l'horizon?»

(Lettre aux communautés de la Mission de France, N° 183 (mars-avril 1997) p. 39.).

Ce sentiment d'impuissance tend aujourd'hui à envahir le monde entier, tant le rapport des forces entre les «profiteurs» du système, même si leur nombre va diminuant, et «les exclus», dont la foule ne cesse de croître, penche du côté des premiers. Un mot pipé parmi tant d'autres aujourd'hui: celui de «démocratie». Si les dictatures militaires tiennent plus rarement le devant de la scène, ne serait-ce pas avant tout parce que les détenteurs du pouvoir économique se sentent aujourd'hui assez forts pour se passer de leurs services?

Ernanne Pinheiro écrit encore:

La violence en monde rural et en ville (avec des massacres particulièrement horribles), le chômage, l'insécurité défient toutes statistiques. Nous avons vécu ces dernières années des manifestations de violence qui révèlent leur caractère structurel...» (article cité, p. 45).

Tout cela au nom de la liberté. Une liberté de plus en plus creuse au fur et à mesure que triomphe le libéralisme, une liberté qui se confond avec la loi du plus fort au mépris de toute autre loi. Si le fameux «Interdit d'interdire» de mai 1968 a pu se comprendre comme le refus de toute législation restreignant indûment les libertés, son ambiguïté est telle qu'il se confond aussi avec la logique même du libéralisme. Un libéralisme qui a fini par produire ce monde «sans foi ni loi» où nous vivons aujourd'hui.

Il me semble indispensable ici de bien voir quelle est cette liberté dont s'enorgueillit le libéralisme. Liberté d'entreprendre et de commercer? Oui. Mais, avec le temps, cette liberté d'ordre économique est devenue de plus en plus englobante de toute l'activité humaine et de la vie de l'ensemble des hommes. Paradoxalement, mais du même mouvement, elle a sans cesse renforcé la fermeture de l'individu sur ses seuls intérêts au détriment du bien commun (cf. le dépérissement progressif de l'Etat). De la masse des individus ainsi lancés dans une concurrence sans frein a émergé une minorité de plus en plus restreinte, concentrant entre ses mains l'essentiel du pouvoir et des richesses de la planète.

Une telle liberté s'est révélée de plus en plus destructrice, non seulement de la nature, mais aussi de tout lien humain et, finalement, de l'homme lui-même.

Pourquoi? Parce qu'une liberté repliée sur elle-même est une liberté si déformée qu'elle devient vite inhumaine. Se fermer à l'autre, se replier sur soi, céder à ses seules envies et ne considérer que ses seuls intérêts, cela est sans doute une pente naturelle à l'individu. Mais alors, l'autre devient pour lui un simple outil de sa réussite personnelle.

En fait, l'individu ne peut se réaliser lui-même, devenir peu à peu «un homme», que dans la mesure où il choisit - librement - de s'ouvrir largement à l'autre pour le reconnaître, le respecter, l'écouter, l'aimer, partager avec lui. S'ouvrir ou se fermer à l'autre: tel est sans doute le choix fondamental de toute existence d'homme, par lequel un «je» naît à une liberté constructive ou, au contraire, s'enferme dans un sentiment de liberté de plus en plus illusoire.

Cependant, s'ouvrir à l'autre jusqu'à accepter de partager avec lui, c'est du même mouvement, s'ouvrir à la loi: celle d'une éthique qui règle impérativement les relations justes et fécondantes entre les hommes. On a longtemps érigé en dogme l'affirmation qu'il faut éviter de mêler la morale à l'économie, leurs lois étant différentes. Il est vrai que l'économie a ses lois propres et que, trop souvent, les morales établies pèchent par étroitesse de vues et par ignorance. Mais il est également devenu évident que, sans un souci éthique toujours à renouveler et à approfondir, il est impossible de construire une économie qui soit au service de l'homme et de tous les hommes.

UN MONDE SOLIDAIRE A CRÉER

Où, aujourd'hui, comment ne pas constater à peu près partout, non seulement l'effondrement en cours des systèmes traditionnels de valeurs, mais, beaucoup plus grave encore, une absence de plus en plus prononcée de véritable souci éthique. C'est ainsi que, dans l'ensemble des pays dits «les plus développés», les scandales financiers se multiplient et prennent des proportions telles qu'on ne peut se défendre de l'impression que la norme devenue régnante est que, pour se faire de l'argent, «tous les moyens sont bons» (Ainsi, au Japon, sous le vocable de «relation d'entraide» (!), de jeunes lycéennes se prostituent au premier venu pour la somme de 20 ou 30 000 yens. Le mouvement s'est assez étendu dans le pays pour être perçu comme un grave problème de société).

Donne aussi à réfléchir le fait que, dans des pays d'Asie comme le Japon, la Chine ou l'Inde, on assiste à la transition de sociétés structurées immémorialement par des systèmes éthico-religieux s'imposant d'en-haut aux consciences, à un indivi-

dualisme généralisé qui laisse les gens, les jeunes surtout, sans référence aucune pour se conduire dans la vie. Au centre de cette évolution, le triomphe du libéralisme...

Parce qu'elle est la nôtre, c'est de cette situation qu'il faut partir pour repérer la voie par laquelle nous aurions quelque chance de sortir de l'impasse libérale. Dans un monde en voie de dislocation, quelle est la force qui pourrait opérer le redressement devenu indispensable?

Personnellement, je n'en vois qu'une. Elle nous habite tous, même si elle se trouve comme étouffée aujourd'hui à l'intérieur du système dans lequel nous sommes contraints de subsister. Cette force est le pouvoir que chacun a de faire des choix de vie, d'adopter dans l'existence quotidienne, des comportements qui rompent carrément avec la logique désastreuse du système libéral.

Ainsi, soumis à cette logique, les médias nous poussent, par tous les moyens, à consommer sans cesse davantage. C'est là, en effet, une question de vie ou de mort pour le système qui nous gouverne: que baissent les indices de la consommation, et c'est partout l'effondrement!

Pourtant, de plus en plus nombreux sont ceux qui sentent bien qu'un choix de vie beaucoup plus sobre serait une vraie libération. Que faire? Car on craint aussi les conséquences d'une baisse importante de la consommation, sur l'emploi par exemple.

Réfléchissons: avons-nous vraiment intérêt à retarder l'effondrement, devenu inévitable, du système libéral? Si un changement dans notre style de vie peut, pour sa part si modeste soit-elle, contribuer à la construction d'une société mondiale allant dans le sens de la solidarité, pourquoi ne pas l'adopter dès aujourd'hui? Dans toute la mesure où, vivant dans des pays riches, nous restons économiquement très favorisés, notre responsabilité est grande à l'égard de tous les exclus, ceux des pays les plus pauvres en premier. Mis hors du circuit de la consommation, ceux-ci se trouvent en effet privés de tout moyen d'agir dans ce domaine.

Certes, ce ne sont pas seulement les modes de consommation, mais aussi les objectifs de la production, le travail, les services, les échanges, les rapports sociaux eux-mêmes qui demandent à être renouvelés dans la perspective d'un monde solidaire à créer. Tâche immense si on

considère le but à atteindre: une nouvelle organisation, à l'échelle mondiale, des relations politiques et économiques entre les peuples, relations qui soient fondées sur le respect des autonomies et la pratique du dialogue. But impossible à atteindre si ces exigences ne sont pas d'abord vécues à la base, la démocratie cessant de n'être qu'un mot pour devenir une réalité.

Utopie sans avenir, tant elle demanderait l'impossible aux hommes? Peut-être... Mais si les hommes se révèlent finalement incapables de prendre en main leur avenir, n'est-il pas complètement illusoire de rêver qu'ils pourraient «s'en tirer» autrement? Impossible ici de contourner la liberté, une liberté à laquelle - et c'est là notre espoir - chaque homme peut naître un jour...

AUJOURD'HUI, LA FORCE DE L'ÉVANGILE...

Si critique doit-on être à l'égard du libéralisme, ne faut-il pas cependant convenir qu'il aura constitué une étape décisive dans l'histoire de l'humanité. Notre critique en relaie une autre: celle qui tire son origine du développement des connaissances scientifiques des derniers siècles.

Critique qui a abouti à mettre fondamentalement en cause toutes les systématisations religieuses, philosophiques ou morales qui, depuis des siècles, régnaient sans conteste dans les différentes aires culturelles de l'humanité. Critique vraiment «libérante», dans toute la mesure où les consciences les plus réfléchies ne pouvaient plus, honnêtement, accepter tels quels les systèmes établis.

La Révolution française a symbolisé cette libération en rejetant l'absolutisation de tout pouvoir humain, et en proclamant sa fameuse maxime: «Liberté, égalité, fraternité».

Malheureusement, avec le développement du libéralisme et, plus encore, depuis que le néolibéralisme s'est «mondialisé», revendiquant sur toute la planète un pouvoir absolu, cette triade indissociable a été réduite à une liberté excluant l'égalité et la fraternité. Une liberté elle-même condamnée à devenir de plus en plus vide et illusoire.

Cependant, le plus grand danger qui nous menace aujourd'hui serait certainement, sous le prétexte de rejeter cette liberté

Pourtant, de plus en plus nombreux sont ceux qui sentent bien qu'un choix de vie beaucoup plus sobre serait une vraie libération.

trompeuse, de sacrifier la liberté en ce qu'elle a de plus authentique (On n'ose pas imaginer ce qui arriverait au cas où les libertés ne se ressaisiraient pas. Le chaos mondial deviendrait sans doute tel qu'il ferait le lit des pires dictatures). La «vérité» du libéralisme, c'est qu'il a inauguré une ère nouvelle de l'histoire humaine: désormais, les rapports entre les hommes et les peuples, à l'échelle même de la planète, ne peuvent plus se fonder que sur l'usage qu'ils feront de leur liberté.

Vivant depuis longtemps au Japon, j'ai évoqué il y a un instant l'évolution brutale de nombre de pays asiatiques vers un individualisme forcené, gros de toutes les menaces. Evolution cependant irréversible à mon sens. Sans doute, ce qui impressionne aujourd'hui, c'est l'égocentrisme, l'absence de communication, la solitude dans laquelle sombrent tant d'individus, jeunes surtout. Mais quelle issue à cette situation, sinon que chacun fasse l'apprentissage, aussi nécessaire que difficile, de sa liberté: une liberté ouverte se faisant peu à peu responsable des conséquences de ses actes au sein de la communauté humaine?

Cependant, qui invite aujourd'hui à pareille «conversion»?...

L'Évangile le fait, manifestant à quel point il reste toujours nouveau et actuel. Ainsi, selon l'évangile de Luc (13, 1-5), la réaction des gens à deux événements tragiques du moment donne à Jésus, qui reprend ainsi la grande tradition prophétique de l'Ancien Testament, l'occasion d'affirmer: *«Si vous ne vous convertissez pas, vous périrez tous de la même manière»* que les victimes de ces deux drames. L'insistance de Jésus porte sur le fait que personne ne peut se croire dispensé d'avoir à se convertir soi-même.

Avant de réfléchir à l'aspect proprement «chrétien» de cet appel à la conversion, il me semble utile, aujourd'hui surtout, d'en souligner la portée universelle, en retenant les deux significations qui s'y trouvent conjointes: se tourner vers l'autre pour le reconnaître, l'accueillir, l'aimer..., et donc changer de vie.

Faute de cette conversion demandée à chacun et librement acceptée, il est impossible aux hommes de vivre ensemble: ils finissent toujours par se détruire les uns les autres. Que dire alors de la mondialisation en cours? Tout en continuant de renforcer sans cesse l'interdépendance entre tous les hommes, elle les enferme de plus en plus dans un individualisme

destructeur de toute forme de solidarité: quel peut être l'aboutissement de cette histoire?

La conversion à laquelle convie Jésus ne prend-elle pas ici tout son sens? Le chemin qu'il indique, il l'a lui-même suivi jusqu'au bout. Son ouverture aux autres était telle qu'elle le conduisit à renverser toutes les barrières socialement infranchissables qui, de son temps, séparaient les hommes en Israël. Les «nantis» du pays ne le lui pardonnèrent pas, se sentant menacés, dans leurs privilèges acquis, par la prédication et l'action d'un homme qui semblait pouvoir entraîner des foules à sa suite (N'est-ce pas ainsi que, par exemple, il faut comprendre dans l'évangile de Jean, les versets 47-50 du chapitre 11?).

En réalité, les plus fervents disciples eux-mêmes suivaient Jésus sans comprendre où il allait, au point qu'ils n'eurent pas la force de faire autrement que de le laisser seul affronter l'épreuve du jugement et de la crucifixion. C'est dans cette solitude, à Gethsémani surtout, que Jésus manifeste à quel point c'est librement qu'il se donne tout entier à nous. Il «sue le sang», mais il ne recule pas.

Certes, cette force d'aimer, lui-même la puise dans l'amour de son Père, et c'est parce qu'il est le Fils bien-aimé de ce Père qu'il ouvre à tous les hommes un chemin d'espérance que ni l'échec ni la mort ne sauraient fermer.

Porteuse de cette espérance pour tous les hommes, l'Église, qui voit aujourd'hui tant de baptisés s'éloigner d'elle, se demande douloureusement comment elle pourrait désormais la leur transmettre. La réponse à cette angoissante question, elle ne peut la trouver, me semble-t-il, qu'en reconsidérant attentivement la manière dont Jésus lui-même a accompli sa mission.

Dans le prologue de son Évangile (1, 9-11), Jean écrit: *«Le Verbe était la vraie lumière qui, en venant dans le monde, illumine tout homme. Il était dans le monde... et le monde ne l'a pas reconnu. Il est venu dans son propre bien et les siens ne l'ont pas accueilli.»*

Pourquoi? *«... les hommes ont préféré l'obscurité à la lumière parce que leurs œuvres étaient mauvaises.»* (Jean, 3,19)

De son côté, Jésus, toujours prêt à pardonner, ne pouvait tolérer aucun accommodement avec la loi de l'amour. C'est là sans doute la raison principale pour laquelle peu le suivirent alors qu'il s'adressait à tous.

Pour attirer à lui les foules ou pour rassembler davantage de disciples, il refuse toujours de céder à la «tentation» de transiger sur les exigences de l'amour et de la liberté (Cf. entre autres, la tentation de Jésus au désert (par exemple en Matthieu, 4, 1-11) et, en Jean 6, 60-69: «*Et vous, n'avez-vous pas l'intention de partir?*»...). Résultat: il se retrouva seul au moment de son arrestation. Or, c'est précisément parce qu'il ne recula pas devant cette solitude qu'il ne cesse d'attirer les hommes à lui et de les unir dans son Corps.

Aujourd'hui plus que jamais peut-être, les chrétiens sont invités à suivre le même chemin pour remplir la mission que le Christ leur confie. Il leur faudra éventuellement, par fidélité à leur Seigneur, accepter d'être peu nombreux et peu suivis, «petit reste» de pauvres dans un monde qui se dit libre mais qui, en réalité, tarde à s'ouvrir aux exigences de l'amour et de la liberté.

Chrétiens, n'avons nous pas à prendre une meilleure conscience de la nature du «lieu» que constitue la Croix du Christ pour tous les hommes? Un lieu difficile d'accès, parce qu'il est celui du don total de soi-même, de la pauvreté évangélique vécue en toutes ses exigences. Mais c'est aussi le lieu, le seul lieu où les hommes peuvent se rassembler dans une unité qui ne soit pas seulement de façade: l'unité de l'amour. N'est-ce pas là reconnaître à quel point chacun d'entre nous aussi a un besoin urgent de conversion? Serons-nous nombreux à la faire véritablement?

Dans un monde qui cherche désespérément un chemin d'espérance, les chrétiens, l'Église,

peuvent-ils attendre davantage pour vivre ouvertement et annoncer courageusement la «Bonne nouvelle» telle que, à la lumière du Verbe et accueillant à l'Esprit, ils peuvent en comprendre le sens pour le monde aujourd'hui? Mission difficile certes, comparable peut-être à celle des premiers chrétiens dans un monde qui, lui aussi, s'effondrait...

Qu'advient-il si nous nous mettons à essayer de vivre à fond les exigences d'un amour visant à établir une solidarité concrète entre l'ensemble des hommes? Et si, en Église, nous osons proclamer hardiment ces exigences, y compris face aux puissants du jour?

Nous pouvons espérer que se formera alors, par convergence avec d'autres initiatives, d'autres mouvements, nés en différents coins du globe, un courant assez éclairé et assez puissant pour donner naissance à la nouvelle culture et à la nouvelle organisation dont notre monde a besoin.

Réussirons-nous? La Croix du Christ est là pour nous rappeler que l'échec lui-même peut féconder l'Histoire. Et si celle-ci devait toucher à sa fin, l'Esprit du Christ ressuscité ne nous assure-t-il pas qu'en mourant, le grain tombé en terre ne peut que porter tout son fruit? (On me permettra ici de renvoyer à mon livre *Le prix de la liberté* (Karthala 1992). La 26^e partie va être publiée cette année 1997 en Japonais sous le même titre que cet article. La 1^{re} l'a été en 1994 par Iwanami.)

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A GOSPEL OPTION FOR ASIA

James H. Kroeger, MM

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Statistics often captivate, startle, and fascinate. Consider: Asia is the world's largest and most populated continent, home to about 60 per cent of humanity. The faces of Asia defy any generalised description; its vast size and numerous people manifest a great geographical, ethnic, cultural, political and religious diversity. Asia is home to more than 85 per cent of all non-Christians. The world's two largest Islamic nations are Asian: Indonesia and Bangladesh. Christians of all denominations are a mere 2-3 per cent of the burgeoning Asian masses.

This context — these Asian realities — formed the background for an international colloquium of the Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life (SALs) that are indigenous to or working in Asia. Easter Week seemed a very appropriate moment to reflect on the mission mandates of the Risen Lord: Go forth. Teach all nations. Be my witnesses to the ends of the earth! (cf. Mt 28:19). The 33 colloquium participants studied "Mission in the Orient" or "A Gospel Option for Asia" as they gathered for five days (April 2-6, 1997) at the Redemptorist Centre in Pattaya, Thailand.

The initiative to convene the Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life emerged from the Office of Evangelisation (OE) of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). Archbishop Telesphore P. Toppo of Ranchi, India, (Chairman of the FABC Office of Evangelisation) opened the colloquium, noting that the gathering must concern itself "with the vast continent of Asia, with its immense multitudes of people dear to God". He continued: "Catholics in Asia constitute a tiny minority. Yet we know they are called to be the light of the Asian world and the salt of the Asian earth. The primary responsibility for spreading the faith in Asia rests on Asian Catholics, first and foremost".

Observing that "the time has come for us to raise our eyes beyond our limited horizon and to cast our glance over the whole of Asia", Archbishop Toppo said that "Asia needs to be shalomised and evangelised.... It is in this context that we have to consider

the matter of Mission Sending Societies. They are the God-inspired instruments of the Asian Church's outreach in love to the millions".

Fraternal greetings to the colloquium participants were received from Jozef Cardinal Tomko, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples: "As I greet all the participants of this very special Asian Conference, ... it is my hope and prayer that, following in the heroic footsteps of so many other missionaries who came to Asia in the past, you will take up with ever greater vigour and spirit this truly missionary charism of mission *ad gentes*". Msgr. Luigi Bressan, Pronuncio of seven Asian nations, paid a brief visit and addressed the assembly, expressing the urgency of mission in Asia through a creative use of statistics and mission data.

Two major papers were presented to initiate the discussion at the conference. Father Sebastian Karotemprel, SDB, Secretary of the FABC Office of Evangelisation, gave an overview of the Missionary Institutes of Apostolic Life. Father Raymond Rossignol, MEP, Superior General of the Paris Foreign Mission Society, presented his "musings" and learnings drawn from his Society's 336 years of missionary endeavours in various Asian countries.

Karotemprel highlighted several items: Even though each local church is responsible for evangelisation, "the role of Missionary Institutes has not diminished.... The age of Missionary Institutes is not a matter of history but of urgent actuality... . Collaboration in mission has, therefore, become very crucial for the very existence and continuance of mission today... . The missionary experience of the older Missionary Institutes will also be a valuable guide for the younger Asian Born Missionary Institutes". Indeed, the conference enhanced such beneficial interchange among the "older" and "younger" Asian Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life (ASAL).

Rossignol, musing over more than three centuries of missionary service in Asia, spoke of Paris Foreign Mission Society history and territorial evangelisation

in Asia, learning languages, sharing the life of Asian peoples and local churches, the formation of local clergy, pastoral activities, and the formation of new churches. Admitting mistakes and failures and thankful for successes, Rossignol noted: “There is obviously an element of mystery in the way God runs his mission... . Mission work remains essentially God’s work”.

Each of the 12 participating mission societies were afforded the opportunity of presenting their mission society, its history and Asian experience, current commitments, learnings and reflections [this was facilitated by documents prepared and distributed in advance]. The four Asian-born SALs, each represented by its Superior General or Father Moderator, were given first priority: Fr Ruben C. Elago, MSP of the Mission Society of the Philippines; Fr Sebastian Vadakel, MST of the Missionary Society of St Thomas the Apostle (India); Fr Bonaventura Jung, KMS of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of Korea; Fr Jean Dantonel, MEP of the Missionary Society of Thailand.

Various Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life (SALs) that serve in Asia sent delegates to the colloquium (they ranged from superior general or general council members to long-term field missionaries). Represented were: Paris Foreign Mission Society, PIME Missionaries (originating in Italy), Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll), Spanish Foreign Mission Society, Quebec Foreign Mission Society, Bethlehem Mission Society (Switzerland), Scarboro Foreign Mission Society (Canada), and the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Family.

A noteworthy fact is that missionaries and diocesan clergy from Asian countries that do not as yet have a foreign mission society were also in attendance: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, and Taiwan. This panorama of mission-focused Asian church-persons produced an extraordinarily rich exchange — to the credit of the organisers of the colloquium. The experience showed that whenever missionaries gather, dynamism and enthusiasm emerge because evangelisation and mission are placed centre-stage, “our special priority” — in the words of one participant.

A brief statement was crafted which captures the highlights of this first international gathering of the Asian Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life (the group popularly called itself the “ASAL Conference”). The final statement gave prominence to

several themes: (1) proclaiming the Gospel in Asia as a new millennium dawns; (2) gratitude to God for the missionary vocation; (3) rejoicing at the growing missionary dynamism of many local churches in Asia; (4) a vigorous recommitment to the unique SAL mission charism that is *AD GENTES*, *AD EXTEROS*, and *AD VITAM*; (5) affirmation of theological foundations of mission and promotion of genuine missionary qualities; (6) establishment of an “ASAL Desk” under the FABC Office of Evangelisation [Maryknoll Father James Kroeger was requested by Archbishop Toppo to head this endeavour]; (7) finally, a series of concrete suggestions aimed at promoting “the proclamation of the Gospel in the Asian context”. These seven topics are a mere listing of the major themes of the colloquium; thus, the full ASAL Statement is presented as the conclusion of this brief overview.

Participants expressed their gratitude to the FABC Office of Evangelisation for its initiative in organising the gathering. They admitted that the colloquium had the strengths and limitations of an initial, organisational conference. The body expressed its strong desire that the role of missionaries in Asia would be adequately represented at the Special Synod of Bishops for Asia. Friendships were formed; commitment to *ad gentes* mission was affirmed; mission experiences, joys, difficulties and dreams were exchanged; faith, prayer, and liturgy integrated the experience.

Throughout the week-long gathering, spontaneous, insightful comments were frequently heard: “Every local church is too poor to think it can manage by itself, and every church is so rich that it has something unique to share”. “Maybe it is time for us as missionaries to pass from the option for the poor to the option for non-Christians — and the second option does not deny the first”. “It struck me that the founders of several missionary organisations had a very lively Eucharistic spirituality”. “All mission necessarily includes mystery and elements of poetry”.

The **FINAL STATEMENT** of the ASAL Colloquium follows.

**CONFERENCE OF ASIAN MISSIONARY
SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE (ASAL)
2-6 April, 1997**

The Office of Evangelisation of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences organised a colloquium for the representatives of the Asian born missionary societies and those others working in Asia, at the Redemptorist Centre Pattaya, Thailand, from April 2-6, 1997, to study their common commitment to the announcement of the Gospel on this vast continent at the dawning of the third millennium. Twelve Societies of Apostolic Life (SAL) were represented.

The participants of the colloquium expressed their gratitude to God for the great vocation that their institutes had received in sharing the mission of local churches in the proclamation of the message of Christ to other peoples, establishing and nurturing to maturity Christian communities in different parts of Asia and beyond. They rejoiced at the growing vitality and dynamism of many of the local churches in Asia that had already become mission-sending churches.

In keeping with the teachings and lived traditions of the older missionary societies, the new ones too joyfully affirmed that their commitment was to taking the gift of the Gospel to those who had not yet heard about Christ, crossing the boundaries of nations, cultures and every other form of barrier. They accepted it as a lifelong commitment (therefore, *AD GENTES*, *AD EXTEROS*, *AD VITAM*).

They realised the importance of profound convictions about the theological foundations on which their calling was based and the strong spiritual motivations that would continue to inspire them.

They looked forward to stirring up missionary zeal both in the local churches and among the members of their own institutes, and raising up active young members with genuine missionary qualities: prayerfulness, charity and generosity, detachment, austerity of life, adaptability, respect for peoples, religions and cultures, availability, courage and optimism, simplicity of manners and authenticity.

They gratefully accepted the offer of the FABC to help them by establishing a desk of ASAL under the FABC Office of Evangelisation, to facilitate relationships among their societies.

Reaffirming their commitment to mission and evangelisation and their unique SAL identity and with the goal of enhancing the proclamation of the Gospel in the Asian context in a co-ordinated way, the participants expressed their hope that several of the following would be achieved:

1. Continued communication of mission experiences, methods, opportunities, and resources; this could partially be accomplished through an ongoing newsletter for all Asian SALs; this newsletter would be edited by the ASAL societies themselves and be published twice a year.
2. Regularly scheduled meetings and Colloquiums; yearly gatherings would be held: (a) in odd-numbered years on an Asia-wide basis; (b) in even numbered years on a world-wide basis with all SAL groups.
3. Ongoing reflection on the unique SAL charism of *ad gentes* mission. This would include mission spirituality, mission theology, and careful selection of apostolates.
4. Sharing of personnel resources among SALs, particularly those qualified in areas of spirituality and missiology.
5. Mutual co-operation of SALs in implementing concrete responses to mission needs in the field and undertaking common *ad gentes* mission in needy places.
6. That ASAL will assure proper representation at both national and continental levels so that the unique charism of SALs will be understood and appreciated.
7. The continued relationship of SALs indigenous to or working in Asia within the ASAL group.
8. Continued mutual relationship between ASAL and FABC.
9. A renewed commitment of SALs to mission animation and promotion in both the local churches of origin and of current apostolate. This calls for a close relationship with our Church of origin. It also demands a sensitivity to the missionary and pastoral plans of the dioceses where they are serving.
10. That as an expression of the missionary nature of each church, Bishops' Conferences explore the possibility of establishing similar mission organisations or institutes in those places where none exist at present.

INCULTURATION OF WORSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY

A VIEW FROM INDONESIA

John Mansford Prior, SVD

John Mansford Prior has been a cross-cultural missionary in Indonesia since 1973. He is Asia-Pacific Secretary for Missiological Education and Research for the Divine Word Missionaries and a consultor to the Pontifical Council for Culture.

A CULTURAL TRANSPLANT

Whether you attend Sunday Worship in an Evangelical, Pentecostal or Roman Catholic Church in Indonesia you may obtain a similar first impression. Christian churches in Indonesia are transplants from their sending churches in Europe. There has long been talk of contextualising and inculturating church life and worship. The most obvious change has been in the hymnals. Hundreds of beautiful songs have been composed and have long become common currency. Local melodies are catchy and we can hear people singing hymns as they go to market, hoe the fields or have a shower. The texts are biblical though the wording rarely takes up the daily struggle to survive as humanly as possible 30 years into Suharto's regime. In Eastern Indonesia song and movement go together. Thus if you came when we were celebrating a feast, liturgical dancing would almost certainly be part of the celebration. However, our worship and our official spirituality were grown in the West.

In colonial days the Dutch allotted each Church, Evangelical and Catholic, an island or part of an island. Most church growth took place towards the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. Different ethnic groups accepted particular Western forms such as German Congregational, Dutch Evangelical and Northern European Catholic. Particular Western forms of Christianity have now become part of the religious and cultural identity of distinct ethnic communities. Sumba is largely Congregationalist, West Timor Presbyterian, Flores Roman Catholic. Not surprisingly, many saw attempts to inculturate the proclamation of the Gospel, Church order and worship as threatening the religious identity of their minority, ethnic Christian Church. (Christians form perhaps 9% of Indonesia's population, with 5% Protestant, 4% Catholic. Perhaps another 4% can be described as "sympathisers". The largest Evangelical Church is the Batak Church in Sumatra in the west. The largest Catholic concentration is on Flores in the east. Figures are very sensitive and thus are purely indicative. The vast majority of

Indonesians are Muslim). Social mobilisation during the past few decades has brought these ethnic Churches into proximity and even conflict. The particular European shape of each Church allows them to maintain strong individual identities. We are in danger of becoming small religious ghettos increasingly marginalised from any significant influence in the life of the country. (The Christian Churches in Indonesia are being "pushed" into ghettos by political and religious factors. They are being "pulled" into ghettos by their over-emphasis upon internal, church activities (choirs, worship, congregational organisations).

FROM ADAPTATION TO INCULTURATION

We are now becoming increasingly aware that inculturation of worship and spirituality does not begin with church commissions, with experts and officials who decide what elements of local culture should be adapted to a framework imported from the West. Neither is the growth of authentic ways of living out one's faith and worship simply a question of the external adaptation of a Western tradition. Authentic liturgy and spirituality celebrate what is most beautiful, most real and most important in life. We celebrate what we believe, our innermost convictions, that for which we are ready to live and die. We recall the prophetic words of Amos (cf. 5:21-24), Isaiah (cf. 1:10-18; 58:1-14) and Hosea (cf. 10:1-10). We recall that worship is "in Spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23-24) and washing one another's feet signifies the Eucharist (cf. Jn 13:1-17). Jesus summed up his mission in the Jubilee words of Isaiah (cf. Lk 4:18-20), and in signs of liberation (cf. Mt 11:2-6). The context for inculturating faith and worship is therefore the struggle for life in all its fullness (cf. Jn 10:10). Concern for the least is at the core of our mission (cf. Mt 25:31-46).

Over 30 years ago the Vatican Council's constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* began its statement on liturgical renewal with a prophetically broad vision.

“The sacred Council has set out to impart an ever-increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful; ... to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call all humankind into the Church’s fold” (n. 1). Inculturation of faith and worship, therefore, should lead to vigorous Christian life and greater Christian Unity. Liturgy is a potent sign of the reconciliation of the entire human race in Christ.

We are now becoming increasingly aware that inculturation of worship and spirituality does not begin with church commissions, with experts and officials who decide what elements of local culture should be adapted to a framework imported from the West.

At certain crucial moments more authentic, intercultural forms are replacing the Western shape of faith and worship. These occur during Bible sharing in basic Christian communities and liturgical celebrations at times of social crisis.

A FRIDAY TO BE REMEMBERED

A major earthquake and tidal wave hit central Flores on 12 December 1992. Over 2,600 people were killed and most public buildings collapsed. (Virtually unreported in the international media. The quake was 6.7 on the Richter scale and lasted for a phenomenal 3 minutes. The epicentre was just 29 kilometres below the surface and just 30 kilometres out at sea. Tidal waves along the north coast took most of the victims). The army flew in to help with emergency reconstruction. Three months later the army was still billeted just outside Maumere town. Tensions arose, culminating on the night of 27 March when a section of the town was surrounded and everybody within that cordon was beaten up. Abdullah, a chance visitor to town, was beaten to death. Maumere was overcome with confusion, fear and anger. The following day the local government and military officials held a press conference stating the official version of events: gangs of youth had gone on the rampage. Rumours abounded that the town would be surrounded a second time. Some were sharpening their machete knives, others kept indoors.

A meeting of pastoral leaders decided that we must proclaim the truth, publicly acknowledge the sin and invite the attackers to repent. On 9 April we were due to celebrate Good Friday. Individual church services were cancelled. One joint procession

was organised under the banner, “Way of the Cross, Way of Justice”. The entire passion narrative of John was read out, divided into 12 readings or “stations”. Over five thousand people gathered outside the mayor’s office to hear of Pilate washing his hands. We moved to the police station to hear of Peter’s denial. Then we moved on to the military barracks to hear of Jesus’ condemnation. The procession came to a climax as we meditated upon the death of Jesus at the place where the Muslim was beaten to death. A young woman sang the ancient “O vos” antiphon, memorised since the days of the Dominican mission 500 years ago as she slowly unfurled a picture of Christ crowned with thorns. Both adults and youth carried a large, heavy cross which was now erected on the site of Abdullah’s murder. A homily was given beginning with an appreciation of Good Friday by Kamel Hussein, an Egyptian Muslim: on Golgotha humanity crucified their conscience. In the short, poetic sermon, the sin was named, the sinners called to repentance. Many shook in fear while the homily expressed in public what everybody knew privately but must not say. By the end of the five hour reading and enactment of John’s passion, the town was again at peace with itself. This was perhaps the most that we could do in a country where there is no certainty in Law, where might is right, where people have long had no voice. (Documentation of the incident was sent to Jakarta through a legal aid agency and journalists. The press took the official line).

What happened that Good Friday in Maumere? A town was brought from fear and anger to calmness and peace, from being ready to take revenge to being willing to forgive, from despair to hope, from timidity towards self respect and a renewed confidence. The word of Scripture was read in dramatic form at a crucial point in the town’s life. For many the cross usually means bowing to fate, accepting one’s lot, “doormat Christianity”. For centuries, even without presbyters and missionaries, without the written Bible or regular sacraments, the people of Sikka and Larantuka on Flores Island have continued with the annual processions of Holy Week. (A fascinating spontaneous syncretism has arisen between the Portuguese incoming tradition and local cosmic values. No attempt by Catholic authorities to suppress this tradition, which is firmly in lay hands, has yet succeeded. The researcher Stefan Dietrich has recently been studying this subject). After Good Friday 1993 the cross has come to mean willingness to suffer with the persecuted, of taking the consequences of speaking the truth in a world of deceit. Since Good Friday 1993 people have been retelling the event, spontaneously in their local languages, in their own images and proverbs, saying in their own tongues

what Paul discovered in his life, “when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor 12:10).

Here, then, is the entry point for inculturation faith and worship: being ready to respond in dramatic and symbolic fashion, with a prophetic word of Scripture at the point when life fractures, and the everyday world of the routine is broken open by crisis. The crisis can be personal — birth, sickness, marriage and death. Above all the opening comes during societal crises, especially when the economic and political forces like “spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12) decide to reinforce a culture of fear and repression.

“YOU ARE ORPAH”

Patisomba is a migrant community that moved from the interior of Flores Island in 1978 after two weeks of gales destroyed their village habitat. For the past 18 years they have lived on the edge of town and on the edge of the economy, being more of a transit point than a new settlement. Each year most of the youth move on further afield to Java, Sulawesi or Kalimantan. In this precarious community of 130 families there is a group of 18 widows. Without support of husband or husband’s family, they live from day to day. Many gather stones for contractors, or walk five kilometres to cut down a few branches to sell in town another 12 kilometres away as firewood. Others buy up vegetables from neighbours to resell at the market. Like ants, with their faces to the ground, they have little chance of looking out at the wider world, controlled as it is by the interests of powerful men.

Both Protestants and Catholics have a national Bible Day on the first Sunday of September. For long, Eastern Indonesia has developed this into a Bible month. In 1994 we read the Book of Ruth, a chapter a week. The widows formed their own group. “I am Naomi” said one relating her personal Naomi biography. “You are Orpah”. “I am Ruth”. The biblical novelette of failure in economic migration brought out stories of the dead end life that the women were leading in the Patisomba transit station. The strategy which the resilient Naomi and Ruth drew up and carried out successfully fired their imaginations. On the final Sunday, they presented their findings to the whole congregation in a series of

dramatic declamations. Meanwhile, youth had studied the same texts on the beach. They presented a dramatised version of the story from the point of view of the young women.

FULLY INDONESIAN, AUTHENTICALLY CHRISTIAN

In these two examples the faith of the people grew through contact between their life situation and the Word of God. An inserted leader needs to be present to enable this to happen. Just as important, the people need to be freed from individualistic and literalist interpretations of the Scriptures. For me this is the key to inculturated worship and spirituality: free the Bible from Western strictures and allow it to speak out in the lives of people, and they will then express their insights and struggles, their problems and aspirations in symbolic form, that is, in living faith and worship. Simply adapting external symbols or adding Indonesian hymns and dancing, gives a certain colour, but does not of itself bring about life transformation. In the words of the Vatican Council renewed worship leads to vigorous Christian life, greater Christian unity and the reconciliation of all in Christ (cf. Eph 1:9-10). Thus, the key

to liturgical contextualisation is the Biblical movement. In Basic Ecclesial Communities we use similar methods to undertake social and cultural analysis as we use in sharing the Biblical Word. Then the Word breaks out not just into personal and interpersonal life, but also into the heart of a society fractured by violence.

Placing social-cultural analysis and Bible sharing as the strategic entry point, does not mean that liturgy becomes mere words. In cosmic cultures like those of Indonesia, the word is expressed in many and varying symbols: song, movement, stories, recitations, proverbs. The Word heard in the encounter between Biblical incident and life crisis is also expressed in natural symbols — plants, stones, flowers. These images are full of colour, vigour and life. However hard the social pressures, the worship is always full of light. This is surely proclamation.

POINTERS

The people, primarily the marginalised, give birth to authentically inculturated expressions of faith and worship at times of

At certain crucial moments more authentic, inter-cultural forms are replacing the Western shape of faith and worship. These occur during Bible sharing in basic Christian communities and liturgical celebrations at times of social crisis.

crisis. This occurs when they are liberated from literalist readings of the Bible. It usually happens outside official agendas. Often the inculturated liturgies are centered upon problems of personal and societal health and healing rather than the regular Sunday Worship. They are more involved in the long series of marriage ceremonies than the Eucharist. Inculturated liturgies are created according to the seasons of repression and social conflict rather than following the Church's liturgical year. The language and rituals are as rough and earthy as the excluded themselves. They are rarely as sophisticated and pure as the high culture of the *élite*. In a silenced culture of people who are economically being pushed to the wall, socially displaced, culturally marginalised, politically voiceless, faith and worship are often thoroughly domesticated. Whether the cultural form is Western or local, these liturgies reinforce their acceptance of their fate. The occasion of a crisis allows a more prophetic and liberating expression to emerge. These life-enhancing incidents need to be nurtured, retold and developed into a vital stream in the peoples' historical consciousness. Few in number, they must be allowed to take hold of the peoples' collective imagination as their myth, their vision of what could and can be the case.

Inculturation does not necessarily mean that everything that was brought in from the West has to be replaced by "pure", local cultural forms. The Fatima statue of the Mother of Jesus brought from Portugal is a fine image of the feminine, life-giving God. All the local symbols are present: stars around her head, the moon at her feet, an authentic representation of the femininity of God that has been present in cosmic religion from of old.

Thus, we are faced with a kaleidoscope of syncretism. Popular religiosity from Europe and local religious culture cross-fertilise spontaneously. Religious devotions long discarded by Biblical purists in the West go hand in hand with radical Bible sharing. Here the first role of the expert in Scripture and liturgy is to look and to listen, to enter the fragile world of very vulnerable people. In sharing their joy and their hope, their fate and their lack of any anchor in life apart from their faith, the cross cultural missionary gradually earns a place to question and challenge what is taking place. "Only this, to do what is right, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with your God" (cf. Mi 6:8).

FREE NELSON MANDELA

Joseph Hanlon

Joseph Hanlon was the co-ordinator of the Commonwealth Independent Expert Committee on Sanctions Against South Africa.

When Nelson Mandela walked from prison seven years ago, it marked the success of one of the biggest grassroots international campaigns. Working together, we freed Nelson Mandela.

It also marked the beginning of a remarkable period of reconciliation and forgiveness. South Africans are working together to build a new and fairer nation, and to redress the heritage of nearly a century of *apartheid*. Most important, South Africans have decided that the best way to build and to move forward is to forgive the crimes committed by the apartheid and not to dwell on the past.

One group has refused to forgive, however — the international bankers.

When Mandela became president, they presented him with a bill for more than £10,000 million. In effect, the bankers said to Mandela: “It was expensive to keep you in prison, sir. It cost a lot to maintain apartheid, to keep White rule, to suppress the majority. The apartheid government borrowed a lot in order to get round international sanctions and import the oil and arms needed to keep you on Robbin Island”.

And the bankers went on: “In 1985 we were very understanding. We realised the high cost of maintaining apartheid, and we agreed that the White government could temporarily stop making debt repayments. But now that South Africa has majority rule, the bill must be paid”.

The majority government is expected to repay the debts run up by the apartheid State and which the bankers never tried to collect from the White minority. That £10,000 million would pay a large part of the African National Congress’s Reconstruction and Development Programme, providing houses, water, electricity and schools for most South Africans.

But the international bankers do not care about redressing the heritage of apartheid. They do not care if tens of thousands of South Africans live in shacks in squatter settlements. Instead, the banks want back the money they lent to White South Africa to help it keep Mandela in jail.

White South Africa used some of those loans to wage an horrific war of destabilisation against neighbouring Mozambique, in which 1 million people died and half of the schools, health centres and rural shops were destroyed. One third of the entire

population was forced to flee their homes. To survive, Mozambique borrowed money. It now owes more than £ 3,000 million — most of that being interest on money borrowed to defend itself against the apartheid onslaught.

Now the bankers are demanding their money. Because of the apartheid war, Mozambique is the second poorest country in the world. This year it will pay £150 million in debt service and only spend £90 million repairing war damage. This year, 650,000 Mozambican children are not in school, because there is no money to repair the schools and nothing to pay the teachers. But the international bankers do not care about children growing up illiterate, so long as the debts are paid.

Apartheid is over, and the wars in southern Africa have ended. But Mozambicans and South Africans are still paying the price. An entire new generation who cannot remember apartheid cannot go to school and suffer poor health and squalid housing because Mozambique and South Africa must pay the apartheid debt before they rebuild.

There is a concept in international law known as “odious debt” — that is, debt which was imposed on people by force of arms and without their consent, and which cannot in law be collected. As early as 1982, lawyers of US banks were privately warning that a majority government in South Africa could refuse to pay money loaned to the apartheid State.

In fact, South Africa and Mozambique have not repudiated their debts. But it is surely immoral to ask ordinary Mozambicans and South Africans to pay for the war the White minority waged against them. Surely this is a debt which should be written off.

Nelson Mandela is not free so long as he and other South Africans are expected to pay the cost of his imprisonment. Mozambicans are not free if they cannot rebuild the damage wrought to their nation by apartheid.

We joined together to create a massive international campaign to free Nelson Mandela from jail. Let us create a new campaign to free Nelson Mandela from the prison of debt.

Ref. “*Jubilee 2000*”.

MORAL IMPERATIVES FOR ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND ECONOMIC REFORM MEASURES

Religious Working Group on the World Bank and the IMF

Individual or institutional endorsements of this statement are welcome and may be sent to the Religious Working Group on the WB/IMF, P.O. Box 29132, Washington D.C. 20017.

Economic decisions — by individuals, institutions and governments — involve moral choices and are subject to moral accountability. We recognise that it is a challenging task to apply moral values to one's institutional responsibilities. Yet our faith traditions insist that public policies be shaped and evaluated according to the standards of God's love and mandate of justice.

In the early 1980's many nations in the global South faced financial crisis. While there were many reasons why this situation developed, the immediate cause was unpayable debt service, precipitated by tight money policies in the rich countries that drastically hiked international interest rates. Much of the original debt was incurred in the 1970's by largely undemocratic governments through questionable lending practices by Northern banks. People living in poverty did not benefit from many of these loans, yet they bear the burden of repayment. In addition, they live with the effects of far-reaching economic policy changes required of countries to qualify for debt restructuring, new loans and foreign investment.

Termed "structural adjustment" and "economic reform", these policies have sought to control inflation and stimulate growth. They include devaluing the national currency; raising interest rates and decreasing the availability of credit; reducing government spending — usually resulting in deep cuts in social programmes and subsidies; lowering tariffs and liberalising trade; and selling State-owned enterprises. Agricultural and industrial production is shifted from food staples and basic goods for domestic use to commodities for export. Adjustment prescriptions have been designed by international institutions led by rich nations and implemented by debtor governments without popular debate or civil society participation.

Adjustment has profound consequences for people in the global South and their natural environments. We hear from brothers and sisters around the world that conditions for many people

living in poverty and suffering under injustice and discrimination have worsened as the result of these measures.

We recognise that some kind of economic reform is often necessary and that environmentally responsible growth is important for impoverished countries. But it is morally unacceptable that people who struggle barely to survive are carrying the burden of these policies on the assumption that the benefits may eventually "trickle down". Means as well as ends must be just. In addition, some evidence suggests that the long-term results of current adjustment policies may be the consignment of millions of people to permanent deprivation. We urge international financial institutions and governments to seek new approaches, which involve greater openness and flexibility, foster broader civil society participation, protect the environment and encourage more equitable distribution of economic power and resources within and among nations.

We write as people of faith in the United States. In listening to our Southern colleagues and reflecting on our faith traditions, we have put forth a set of moral criteria applicable to the design and evaluation of economic reforms. We offer these principles as a basis for dialogue, conscious that as individuals and religious institutions we, too, need to make new efforts to embrace more fully the values we articulate.

The values we affirm here are not new. They are rooted in our Scriptures and have been expressed repeatedly in our churches' public statements on social, economic and environmental justice. While this statement is explicit about our underlying theological convictions derived from the Christian tradition, we understand that other religious faiths and widely accepted moral beliefs embrace similar values. Each section of this statement presents a biblical/theological affirmation, applies this as a moral standard to economic reform measures and

summarises what we have seen and heard about the current reality.

1. All of life exists within the sphere of God's care and judgement. Individuals, institutions, business enterprises and governments are objects of God's concern and subject to moral accountability. This includes the economic realm. There are no economic "laws" that can place policy decisions beyond moral scrutiny. Economic actors and policy-makers are morally accountable for their choices and their effects, intended or otherwise, on people and all of God's creation. Since "the earth is God's", its resources must be employed in a sustainable manner for the benefit of all, not just a privileged minority.

Therefore: To be just, economic reform measures must contribute to a social framework in which property ownership and use, productive activity and commerce occur at a level and in a manner suitable for **meeting the basic needs of all**, serving the common good, alleviating poverty and preserving the natural environment.

In practice, we have seen and heard that economic adjustment measures have made it more difficult for many people to meet their basic needs and often result in environmental damage. We observe that policies supported by appeals to inevitability, efficiency and aggregate growth often have had the effect of serving the interests of the wealthy and powerful at the expense of ordinary people. International institutions, governments and private corporations frequently focus on their short term institutional benefit, failing to adequately serve the common good.

2. Human beings are created in the image of God. All persons — male and female — are created in the divine image, loved by God and equal in worth, dignity and fundamental rights. Bearing the divine image, everyone has the right and responsibility to participate meaningfully in the political, social and economic decisions that shape their society. In harmony with all creation, all people are entitled to an equitable share in the fruits of the earth. The economy exists for people, not people for the economy.

Therefore: To be just, economic reform measures must respect and **enhance human dignity and gender equity**. They must be flexibly designed and implemented with the consent of the people expressed through authentically participatory and democratic processes. Reforms must be held

accountable to **international human rights standards** and treaties.

In practice, we have seen and heard that the nature and pace of adjustment measures generally have been determined without public debate or civil society participation. We observe that, as a result, some persons who enjoy political, social and economic privileges benefit from these policies, while many of those who lack such privileges are compelled to carry the principal burden of adjustment, having to cope on a daily basis with its negative consequences. We see and hear that adjustment has too often contributed **to the weakening of human rights**, for example, by placing additional burdens disproportionately on women, who often must increase their unpaid and paid labour in order to make up for the loss of government services and family income.

3. Human beings are persons-in-community, intended to live in relationships of human solidarity according to the norms of love and justice. All people are created and called to love God and neighbour — across the divisions of ethnicity, class and nation. **Justice is love distributed** and requires that everyone have access to sufficient resources to live in dignity, meet their family's needs and fully participate in the shared life of their community. Great extremes in the distribution of income and wealth must be avoided. Our relationship with God and one another is violated when some people have much more than they need while many others lack the basic necessities.

Therefore: To be just, economic reform measures must promote **a more equitable distribution of power and wealth within and among nations**. Reform must foster solidarity and justice among people locally, regionally and internationally, reduce economic and social inequality, and support and strengthen local communities and co-operative development processes.

In practice, we have seen and heard that economic adjustment has often resulted in **greater unemployment**, decreasing wages and deteriorating working conditions for many, while increasing the wealth of some. We observe that the pattern of wealth distribution in the global, national and local economies is generally becoming more skewed, and that reforms have not addressed this injustice. We have seen and heard that this accelerating inequality has weakened families and communities.

4. God is redeemer and liberator, calling us to a special concern for people living in poverty and oppression. The work of God involves lifting up and empowering people living in poverty and the redemption of human beings from every kind of oppression — personal and social. According to Christ's teaching in Matthew 25, nations and people will be judged on the basis of how they **treat the hungry, homeless, and most vulnerable members of society**.

Public policies, laws and economic relationships that we create can become instruments of emancipation by giving preference to the dignity of those who labour, human rights, gender equity and sustaining the earth, above the interests of capital.

Therefore: To be just, economic reform measures must make **poverty eradication the priority for every phase of reform**. Reform must not increase the burden on the poorest members of society, but should maximise benefits and minimise costs for all categories of people living in poverty. It must ensure that people struggling to overcome poverty have access to productive assets, benefit from public and private investment and are served by the generation of sustainable livelihoods. Reform must **recognise the role of the State and other forces of society** to appropriately control the market and provide a social safety net.

In practice, we have seen and heard that even when macroeconomic indicators suggest improvement in a country's economy, people living in poverty frequently experience increasing insecurity and see insufficiency deepen into misery. For example, a country's overall agricultural sector can be growing because of exports by commercial farms, even as small farmers lose the ability to make a simple living. We observe that adjustment measures have often resulted in **dramatic decreases in social spending**, recent attempts to mitigate social damage notwithstanding. We see that the unpaid work of women — often made more burdensome by structural adjustment — is not even included in official economic indicators.

We observe that reforms often have created a climate in which labour rights are difficult to exercise and where people in poverty must compete with each other for their means of survival.

5. Creation is an expression of the goodness of the Creator and is endowed with dignity and value. Human beings are called to live in mutually sustaining relationships with each other and with all crea-

tion. Human activity should enhance, not destroy the beauty, diversity and richness of all life. The unsustainable use of increasing portions of the earth's resources deprives people and all God's creatures of what the Creator has provided: enough for all. In response to God's work of reconciling all things in Christ, human beings are called to repentance for abusing the earth and to the restoration of their broken relationships with all creation.

Therefore: To be just, economic reform measures must **promote sustainable development**. Reforms must be designed to improve the quality of human life, preserve the natural environment, respect all creatures and ensure the ability of future generations to meet their own spiritual and material needs.

In practice, we have seen and heard that economic reform measures too often have had the effect of accelerating soil degradation, water pollution, watershed disruption, the destruction of critical habitat and the loss of other renewable and non-renewable natural resources. We see that reform has often **weakened governments' ability to protect the environment**. We observe that the need for growth in impoverished countries must be balanced by world-wide efforts to end environmentally unsustainable production and consumption, especially in the industrialised countries.

6. Sin is social and institutional, as well as personal. Social sin is present where there are growing economic disparities, increasing concentrations of economic power, and accelerating environmental abuse. Only God is ultimate. It is a form of idolatry when any given economic model or system is viewed as complete or fully adequate.

Therefore: To be just, economic reform measures must not be rigidly based on any one economic model. They should be flexibly adapted to specific social, economic and environmental contexts and open to **innovative designs responsive to popular and democratic needs** and initiatives.

In practice, we have seen and heard much scepticism from people living in and struggling to overcome poverty concerning the current economic model that emphasises minimal government, "trickle down" and global integration. We observe that adjustment measures based on this model **have not adequately taken into account individual countries'** particular sets of needs and circumstances or to the social and environmental consequences of such reforms.

7. **All humanity is called to forgiveness, reconciliation and jubilee.** The biblical witness mandates just and equitable commercial relationships, selfless help to those in need and the cancellation of oppressive debts that keep people locked in poverty. It calls for the restoration of land and livelihood to the dispossessed. Jesus taught that God will treat our debts in light of our treatment of others' debts to us. The crushing international debt burden unjustly carried by millions of people living in impoverished countries cries out for justice.

Therefore: To be just, economic reform measures must be accompanied by a **definitive cancellation of the crushing international debt** of poor countries. Debt relief must not be rigidly conditioned on adjustment that further burdens people living in poverty, and it must be implemented in ways that primarily benefit the ordinary people who have borne the major burden of their countries' indebtedness.

In practice, we have seen and heard that entire economies are reshaped by the conditions placed on debt restructuring and new loans. While international creditors have now acknowledged that unsustainable debt burdens should be relieved, **current strategies have set mere "debt sustainability" as their stated goal.** Even if this approach is successful, people living in poverty will be left perpetually repaying resource-draining debts. We observe that the real goal of debt relief and economic reform must be socially and environmentally sustainable development within the framework of just and equitable global relationships.

Ref. *Maryknoll Peace and Justice*,
May 1997.

SEDOS SYMPOSIUM

***** AMERICA — THE KAIROS OF A SYNOD *****

Tuesday, 18 Nov. 19.30 hrs.	R. Muñoz, SSCC Santiago, Chile.	<i>La evolución de la Iglesia en América Latina vista a través de sus Conferencias de Medellín, Puebla y S. Domingo</i>
20.45 hrs.	Alvaro L. Ramazzini, Bishop, Guatemala.	<i>La Iglesia en América Central ante la diaria realidad de la droga y sus consecuencias</i>
Friday, 21 Nov. 19.30 hrs.	María Riley, OP Center of Concern, US.,	<i>Women: Changing Roles, Changing Consciousness — The Challenge of Mission</i>
20.45 hrs.	John H. Ricard, Bishop, Florida.	<i>The Church in the United States and the growing problem of marginalisation and alienation in contemporary society</i>
Tuesday 25 Nov. 19.30 hrs.	Javier Giraldo, SJ Bogotá, Colombia.	<i>Los Pobres sometidos a los poderes de este mundo — Pastoral de Justicia en América Latina (Colombia)</i>
20.45 hrs.	Patrick F. Flores, Archbishop, San Antonio, Texas.	<i>The Latins in our Local Churches — A Call to Pass Over and Creative Renewal</i>
Friday 28 Nov. 19.30 hrs.	Elza Ribeiro, IPG Ex-President of CLAR, Brazil.	<i>La Vida Religiosa — Signo y Esperanza en el Continente Latinoamericano hoy y mañana</i>
20.45 hrs.	Alejandro Goic, Bishop, Osorno, Chile.	<i>Hacia una Iglesia Renovada a partir de la Participación del Pueblo</i>
Tuesday 2 Dec. (morning) 9.00 - 13.00 hrs. SEDOS Gen. Assembly	Robert Schreiter, CPPS. CTU Chicago.	<i>World Order, Conflict and Mission at the Turn of the Millennium</i> <i>Reconciliation as Good News in a Divided World?</i>
Friday 5 Dec. 19.30 hrs.	Jamie Phelps, OP CTU Chicago.	<i>The Long March of the Black Church of the United States to Recognition and Identity</i>
20.45 hrs.	Julio Terrazas, Archbishop, Santa Cruz, Bolivia.	<i>La Iglesia en Bolivia ante la situación de pobreza crónica</i>
Tuesday 9 Dec. 19.30 hrs.	M.T. Porcile Santiso, Montevideo, Uruguay.	<i>Ser teóloga desde América Latina — Urgencia y desafío de ver la salvación desde la mujer</i>
20.45 hrs.	Erwin Kräutler, Bishop, Xingu, Brazil.	<i>Xingu-Amazonia — Iglesia profética y participativa al servicio de una vida para todos</i>
Thursday, 11 Dec. 19.30 hrs.	Juan Bottazzo, SDB Quito, Ecuador.	<i>El rostro multiétnico de América Latina — un reto para la Iglesia</i>
CONCLUSION 20.45 hrs.	Paulo Evaristo Arns, Cardinal, São Paulo.	<i>La Iglesia frente al desafío pastoral de las grandes ciudades</i>