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"THE SPRING OF THE POOR? LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN FROM MEDELLIN TO APARECIDA

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Editorial

The experience of the SEDOS Residential Seminar is always a highlight in the life of Congregation members. Indeed, it is a time to live our sense of belonging in a special way. Meeting at the Seminar makes us realize in a particular way that we are Church and that, coming from different parts of the world, we are “called to embrace the world as a graced community”. That’s our common mission, so, as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, we continue to search for ways and the appropriate means to implement the mandate we have received. Reading the signs of the times sharpens our attitude of listening to what the Spirit is saying to each continent.



This year our focus was the journey of the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Our aim was to get a better knowledge of the process, evolution and present situation of the Church. We studied the role of the Laity, Women and the Emergence of the Indigenous Peoples; and especially that of Religious Life in the context of the changes promoted by Vatican II. We celebrated the blessings the Spirit has bestowed upon the Church since the Second Vatican Council and the theme was: “The Spring of the Poor?” – Latin America and the Caribbean – from Medellín to Aparecida.

The **Keynote Speakers**, most of whom were from Latin America and the Caribbean, led us with deep insight. I want to send our Readers the following statements which sum up the substance of the Seminar: “The unexpected Spring breeze” that the Second Vatican Council represented for the Catholic Church and other churches was also perceived and re-interpreted in Latin America. The Continent of Hope no longer wanted to be a “reflex Church”, but rather a “source Church” that not only received and copied the European Model, but was able to create and develop something new and, at the same time remain loyal to the new proposals deriving from the breeze of renewal brought by the Council” (**Maria Clara Lucchetti BINGEMER, Ph.D.** “From Medellín to Aparecida”).

Fr. Dr. Luis Alberto NAHUELANCA, OFM, briefly explains why the Church in Latin America became a “source Church”: it is because “The General Conferences of CELAM have been the expression “of a profound dynamism of Collegiality and Episcopal communion”. “That also implies a true “pastoral conversion” to learn to “walk together”, to discover that they are “companions for the journey” along the path traveled together in the one single mission of Christ, single but varied as to its historic achievements according to the diverse missionary situations as well”. Fr. Luis Alberto concludes saying that there is no doubt, for the conscience of the People of God, the General Conferences “have profoundly affected the manner of being Church for the Latin American continent.

With regard to the situation of Women, Sister **Teresa LOWE CHING, RSM**, from Jamaica, tells us that “Caribbean women, like women elsewhere in the world, are struggling for their liberation and self-realization in the Church and Society. They endorse the alternative vision of the present postmodern worldview while still being conscious of its negative aspects. In 2001 Sister Theresa raised a key question about the role of Women in the Society and Church, and during the Seminar she poses with even more urgency, in view of the heightened awareness of women’s issues in the Church today. This urgency is compounded by the increasing impact the feminist discourse and liberationist movements have on the consciousness and agenda of contemporary society, both nationally and globally. And she asked then, “Is the freeing of women’s potential perhaps the missing link that, up until now, has prevented a real transformation in our ecclesial and societal structures? This same question guided the development of this presentation.

Fr **Nicanor Sarmiento Tupayupanqui**, OMI, stresses the relevance of the emergence of the Andean Christian Theologies in Bolivia and Peru. It is an important contribution that the Indigenous Peoples can make to the universal Church, because the emerging theology is the fruit of their life experiences.

Ms **Emilia Robles** laid before the participants the experience of the committed Lay Faithful in the Church not only in Spain but also in the world. "There is a strong historical trend that shows the laity as an emerging group from the second half of the nineteenth century. Today this current is reinforced, validated and re-emphasized by the Second Vatican Council. It creates and strengthens a renewed self-consciousness of the vocation, the dignity and the identity of the faithful laity; of their belonging and responsibility in ecclesial communion, and their contribution to the Mission of the Church. And now, more concretely, in these early days of the twenty-first century, there are specific challenges that relate to this group. Challenges that involve the entire ecclesiastical community and that have an impact on all humanity, the poor in particular, to whom we try to bring our vision". In her reflection, Ms. Emilia expanded on the fact that not all groups of lay people have the same visibility or the same opportunity to express their voice in the Church; in fact, there are various categories of Laity within the Church and not all are considered as equal, she added.

Our Readers will enjoy the feedback from the four African Sisters and one Asian Sister invited by SEDOS. They are all active missionaries, who are working respectively in Africa, Europe or Latin America. We are facing the challenges of the mission paradigm shifts: Mission is no longer from the centre to the margins, but from the margins to the Centre. How can SEDOS help to provide missiological formation for the Indigenous Congregations that are sending their missionaries abroad? We also thank Fr. Gaetano MAZZOLENI, IMC, who has a passion for the Indigenous Peoples. He has not only shared his insights, fruit of his experience in the field, but he has also offered his article, in Italian, for publication.

We wish you all the best as we journey together toward the celebration of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on "the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith" from 7 to 28 October 2012. And may the inauguration of the Year of Faith proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI be a significant event for all of us today.

Sister Nenzili MBOMA, FMM,
Executive Director,
SEDOS.

OPENING ADDRESS

Welcome!

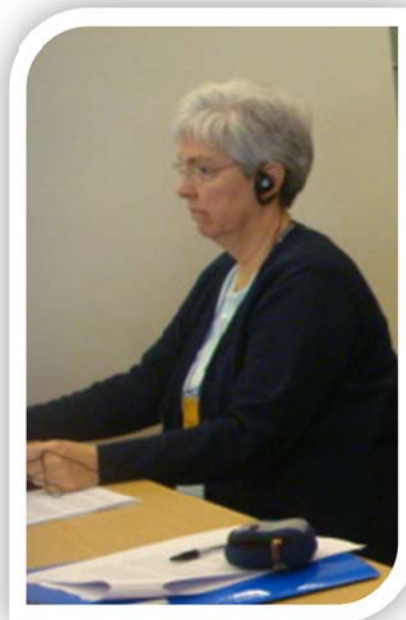
Good afternoon everyone. On behalf of the Executive Committee of SEDOS, it is truly a great privilege for me to welcome each of you to our 2012 SEDOS Conference here in Nemi. I welcome our participants who have traveled from near and far to come for this event, our presenters from America Latina and the Caribbean, our translators and all those who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes these past months to prepare for this conference. We want you to feel at home in this beautiful setting at Nemi where it is predicted that the sun will shine upon us this week.

It is my hope that, in these next few days, we who gather here as disciples of Christ Jesus will grow together as a community of faith, creating bonds of communion that will extend beyond the life of this conference. I also hope that we will become a learning community and a discerning community as we listen and learn from others, share from the wealth of our own lived experience, and grapple with the challenges that we know or the new challenges that we will discover together. And I hope that this experience will have positive influences on our ministry and mission when we leave this place.

Now, in the languages of the Conference I would like to say: Benvenuti! Bienvenidas! Bienvenue! Welcome!

However, I do not think that it is enough for me to welcome you; we need to welcome each other. And I am aware that there are many participants here who represent national, cultural and language groups other than those that we will be speaking these days. So, I invite you now to speak a word of "welcome" to all of us in your own language. (Pause)

Thank you. Once again, I say: Welcome to one and all! Enjoy the Conference.



Sister Georgeanne M. Donovan, SMSM,
Superior General, President of SEDOS
8 May 2012

Luis Alberto Nahuelanca Muñoz

LA IGLESIA LATINOAMERICANA Y CARIBEÑA Y SUS CONFERENCIAS GENERALES.

Una visión panorámica

1. Algunas notas preliminares

El objetivo de mi presentación será ofrecer un desarrollo histórico de los principales hitos del caminar de la Iglesia latinoamericana; no se trata de una acabada relación sobre el tema, es sólo un “mapa de ruta” para situarnos en el camino que juntos haremos esta semana de reflexión, situados entre la memoria y la profecía. Será una relación leída e interpretada, especialmente, a la luz de este dinamismo pneumatológico de la sinodalidad, particularmente expresada, a través de sus Conferencias generales. Este desarrollo histórico nos permitirá también ir descubriendo los principales lineamientos teológicos, pastorales y misionológicos que la reflexión magisterial de los pastores latinoamericanos, que en espíritu sinodal y de colegialidad han ido cristalizando en los diferentes documentos, de cara a realidad local y continental..



El Concilio Vaticano II abrió las puertas hacia una nueva manera de ser y de vivir como Iglesia de Cristo; nos mostró los horizontes de una nueva eclesiología: de comunión y participación. Desde esta nueva autocomprensión eclesiológica, las iglesias locales tendrán su protagonismo como expresiones vivas y verdaderas de la Iglesia de Jesucristo, una santa, católica y apostólica, reunidas en el Espíritu Santo, fuente de comunión misionera y de misión comunal¹, hablando en la diversidad de las lenguas del mundo; siendo tributarias de una herencia cultural, de una visión del mundo, de un pasado histórico y de un substrato humano determinado², exigencias propias de su fidelidad evangelizadora inculturada, al más puro estilo de los comienzos eclesiológicos neotestamentarios.

Esta experiencia de koinonía, no es sólo un dinamismo comunal intraeclesial de las comunidades, como un movimiento al intimismo y al enclaustramiento; al contrario, es un movimiento centrífugo de apertura, de contacto y de diálogo ecuménico con las otras comunidades cristianas, de colaboración solidaria, en el común propósito de construir la unidad plena deseada por Cristo, en su Vida y su Misión compartida; cercanía fraterna con la vida de otros creyentes, conocimiento y respeto de la riqueza de sus propias tradiciones religiosas; y, una disposición generosa de escucha y acogida de las voces de la historia y de los “signos de los tiempos”, para sentir el silencioso germinar de los brotes de las “semillas del Verbo, en la rica diversidad y pluralidad de las culturas y tradiciones, en la cuales la Iglesia se hace compañera de camino y de viaje (sinodal).

Este espíritu de la sinodalidad, que eclesiológicamente indica un aspecto esencial de la “communio ecclesiarum”, en vista a la integración de las diversas Iglesias locales, en la única Iglesia de Cristo, la Iglesia Latinoamericana, como toda Iglesia local, lo ha vivido con expresividad creativa, como una dimensión de su vida eclesial, como un estilo y un obrar pastoral, que ha implicado a los pastores y a sus respectivas comunidades; y, además, ha significado una verdadera “conversión pastoral”, para aprender a “caminar juntos”, saberse “compañeros de viaje”, en el itinerario convivido de la única misión de Cristo, pero diversificada en sus realizaciones históricas, en atención a las diversas situaciones misioneras y a sus correspondientes destinatarios presentes en el continente.

2. Las Conferencias Generales del Episcopado Latinoamericano y Caribeño

Uno de los grandes patrimonios que la Iglesia Latinoamericana puede ofrecer al concierto de la Iglesia universal es precisamente su rica experiencia comunal de sinodalidad; una eclesialidad creativa construida desde la diversidad étnico-lingüística-cultural de sus pueblos en donde ella hace visible su teologal testimonio de Cristo y de pasión por el Reino.

Las Conferencias generales han sido la expresión “de un profundo dinamismo de colegialidad y comunión episcopal”; no hay dudas en la conciencia del Pueblo de Dios, que ellas “han sellado hondamente la manera de ser Iglesia en el continente latinoamericano. No es posible entender el peregrinar de la Iglesia por estas tierras en las últimas (...) décadas sin la obligada referencia a estas jornadas y sus correspondientes documentos”³.

Los documentos finales de las Conferencias son fruto del espíritu de sinodalidad y de encuentro colegial de los obispos, que en el Espíritu y su santa operación, discernen “los signos de los tiempos”, en las realidades históricas de América Latina; son un espejo de la vida de la Iglesia en el continente, con sus características particulares, acentuaciones propias y su fuerte sentido de pertenencia a la Iglesia universal.

A continuación ofrecemos un desarrollo histórico de las Conferencias Generales, haciendo un énfasis en sus principales acentuaciones teológico-pastorales y misioneras; reflexiones que abordan, desde la mirada de la fe, las diversas situaciones socio-culturales del continente y discernen los caminos posibles para una eficaz evangelización.

2.1 Río de Janeiro. I Conferencia General

La primera Conferencia general fue convocada por el Papa Pío XII y celebrada en Río de Janeiro (Brasil) entre los días 25 de julio al 4 de agosto de 1955. Allí el Papa, a través de su Carta Apostólica *Ad Ecclesiam Christi*, del 29 de junio de 1955, hace presente a los obispos de las Iglesias locales de América Latina una llamada de atención sobre diversas problemáticas, de orden eclesial y social, las cuales reclamaban una urgente acción pastoral, más coordinada y más eficaz: escasez de vocaciones sacerdotales; deficiencias graves en la formación del laicado; la defensa de la fe católica frente a la acción de las “sectas”; la “cuestión social” y la influencia de las ideologías materialistas; como asimismo una preocupación por una activación de la misionariedad de la Iglesia en América latina.



Las tres problemáticas más apremiantes analizadas y discernidas por los obispos fueron: 1) *La escasez del clero*, tema de gran incidencia y fuerza en el documento; 2) *El tema de la formación sacerdotal y laical*; 3) *La problemática social* (“la cuestión social”), sobre la cual los obispos sólo hicieron una declaración de buenas intenciones, sin entrar en mayor profundización y análisis exhaustivos de las situaciones sociales que ellos constatan y que aquejan al Continente.

En esta búsqueda por dar mayor visibilidad a la comunión y colegialidad eclesial latinoamericana y romper así con el aislamiento e incomunicación de las Iglesias locales, cuya dispersión de obras e iniciativas caracterizaban “una acción de la Iglesia fragmentada”⁴, nace el Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM). De esta forma los obispos acogían las palabras del Papa Pío XII en su ya citada Carta Pastoral *Ad Ecclesiam Christi*, dándole así concretes y realización, en vista “a no malgastar valiosas energías, sino multiplicarlas con apropiada coordinación”, abriéndose a “camino nuevos”, “acomodados a las exigencias de los tiempos”.

De esta manera “la Iglesia del continente comenzó a tener más clara conciencia de sí misma, de su fisonomía propia y vocación específica, de la coordinación y de actividad pastoral”⁵ y una decena de años antes que el Concilio Vaticano II discutiera la doctrina de la colegialidad episcopal, ella “la ponía en marcha no con palabras, sino con obras y de verdad:

algo profético que servirá más tarde de modelo para otras Iglesias de diversos lugares en la Iglesia universal”⁶.

2.2. Medellín. II Conferencia General

La II Conferencia General del CELAM es considerada “un acontecimiento de la mayor trascendencia para el Pueblo de Dios en el continente latinoamericano”; considerado “el inicio de una nueva etapa en la autoconciencia de la Iglesia y en el compromiso evangelizador”⁷; y calificado como “un auténtico Pentecostés”; “un verdadero ‘paso del Señor’ por nuestro continente”; “un acontecimiento salvífico”.

El momento “genésico” de la II Conferencia tuvo lugar en medio del desarrollo del Concilio Vaticano II; allí los obispos del Continente, reunidos en la IX Asamblea ordinaria del CELAM, con Don Manuel Larraín (obispo de Talca- Chile) a la cabeza, plantearon la idea de un nuevo encuentro episcopal latinoamericano que se ocupara de la recepción de la renovación conciliar en la realidad eclesial y socio-cultural del Continente; petición que fue aprobada por el Papa Pablo VI.

El gran tema que convocó a los obispos latinoamericanos en Medellín fue **“La presencia de la Iglesia en la actual transformación de América Latina”**, a la luz del Vaticano II. Los pastores, interpelados por la cruda realidad de sus pueblos, buscan, en espíritu de comunionalidad, desde un detenido discernimiento de “los signos de los tiempos”, caminos, criterios, estrategias, para una evangelización renovada y que cristalice en la práctica “el dinamismo pentecostal” del Concilio, con toda su fuerza de renovación, de apertura y de diálogo con las situaciones históricas del continente.

Evangelizar en el espíritu del Concilio Vaticano II, implicó para los obispos mirar la realidad; abrir los ojos a la geografía humana, social, política, cultural y económica del continente. En este sentido la metodología elegida para el análisis de la realidad será de gran importancia. Se abre un nuevo esquema mental: ver, juzgar y actuar. Se parte de la realidad y se hace una lectura desde la fe; una Iglesia que hace una lectura creyente de “signos de los tiempos”; busca las causas e identifica las consecuencias pastorales y misioneras y el asumirá el desafío de “un nuevo actuar”, con nuevas y renovadas estructuras de evangelización.

Los obispos latinoamericanos portan, en la sensibilidad y en la mentalidad la frescura del Concilio Vaticano II, especialmente la nueva autocomprensión de la Iglesia, un Pueblo de Dios que camina en medio de la conflictividad de la historia humana, como “sacramento universal de salvación”; con la conciencia de ser “misionera por naturaleza” (LG, AG) y su nueva actitud y mirada para con la realidad histórica, conociendo y comprendiendo el mundo en que vivimos, sus esperanzas y aspiraciones (GS); por otro lado, los pastores tienen ante sus ojos las luces del gran documento magisterial de Pablo VI, “*Populorum Progressio*”, el cual será fundamental a la hora de mirar y discernir la realidad continental, a fin de abrirse a la gran aventura eclesial de una “evangelización liberadora” como respuesta urgente a un continente que requiere pasar “de condiciones menos humanas a condiciones más humanas”⁸.

En este desafiante proyecto está la solidaridad y caridad pastoral del Papa quién personalmente inaugura este “nuevo Pentecostés” para la Iglesia en América Latina. Cobra importancia este acontecimiento dado que es la primera vez que un Papa visita a este continente, inaugurando así con su presencia “un nuevo período de la vida eclesíastica”, en donde “la Iglesia vuelve a irrumpir en la historia de América Latina con dinámica y voz propias, en sintonía y respuesta a las grandes necesidades colectivas de los pueblos. Por eso, desborda los marcos eclesíásticos y se proyecta en todo el continente”⁹.

Nuestro punto de atención a la hora de buscar las acentuaciones teológico-pastorales y misioneras más importantes de la Conferencia de Medellín serán las Conclusiones, las que son recogidas en 16 documentos y divididas en tres áreas¹⁰, las cuales indican claramente los tres grandes temas que fueron gravitantes en la reflexión de los pastores, de cara a la realidad

socio-cultural y religiosa del Continente: *la opción por los pobres, las comunidades eclesiales de base y la liberación*.

La Iglesia en Medellín abrió los ojos a la realidad del hombre latinoamericano y se encontró con las mayorías empobrecidas y creyentes del continente: indígenas, afroamericanos, campesinos, los pobres de las periferias urbanas y tomó conciencia de sus duras condiciones de vida. El subdesarrollo y sus nefastas consecuencias de pobreza y miseria era una de las principales preocupaciones de entonces- y sigue siéndolo hoy- para los pastores, a la hora de buscar nuevos caminos para una eficaz evangelización, que pase por una revalorización profunda del sujeto invitado a vivir el don de la fe: la persona humana¹¹ y su situación histórica; porque, como dirá años más tarde el Papa Pablo VI, la Iglesia no evangeliza territorios, evangeliza personas¹².

Todas las páginas Medellín están atravesadas por esta realidad inhumana e injusta de los pobres. Al discernir estas situaciones históricas y al leerlas a la luz del Evangelio, ellos comprendieron, que la vida de inhumana pobreza en que viven las mayorías no es voluntad de Dios, sino una situación pecaminosa que se debe superar¹³. Este es el “clamor profético” de los obispos en Medellín; es la “experiencia fundante” de una opción preferencial por los pobres y la apuesta por visibilizar aún más el testimonio teológico de una “Iglesia de los pobres”, como una nueva conciencia y una nueva manera de ser Iglesia, en el mismo espíritu del clamor del Papa Juan XIII, expresado en su mensaje en los tiempos previos al Concilio Vaticano II: “ante los países subdesarrollados, la Iglesia se presenta como es y quiere ser: la Iglesia de todos y particularmente la Iglesia de los pobres”¹⁴.

Medellín colocó, en fidelidad a Jesucristo y su pasión por el Reino de la justicia y la paz, a los pobres y su liberación en el centro de su vida y misión. Ante esta situación de miseria que margina a grandes grupos humanos, el desafío de la evangelización de la Iglesia en América Latina, es una contribución efectiva a la promoción integral del hombre y de las comunidades del continente, que signifique liberación y crecimiento en humanidad, en fidelidad al Plan de Dios.

2.3. Puebla. III Conferencia General

Los obispos en Medellín habían lanzado a la Iglesia Latinoamericana a una “nueva evangelización”, a fin de promover una “fe lúcida y comprometida”¹⁵, de cara a un contexto social tremendamente explosivo: la realidad de pobreza inhumana de millones de personas en el continente. Esto llevó a los pastores a enfrentar el reto de una renovación de las estructuras eclesiales tendiente a llevar adelante una evangelización mucho más encarnada y consecuentemente liberadora, haciendo una profética opción por los pobres y su destino preñado de liberación; asumiendo el desafío de una nueva forma de ser Iglesia, una Iglesia de los pobres, como ya lo había soñado el Papa Juan XXIII en las horas previas del Concilio Vaticano II.

A diez años de la realización de la Conferencia de Medellín, el Espíritu nuevamente conduce a la Iglesia Latinoamericana hacia “nuevo pentecostés”: la III Conferencia del Episcopado Latinoamericano, que tuvo como lema: “La Evangelización en el presente y en el futuro de América Latina”, fue convocada por el Papa Pablo VI, confirmada por el Papa Juan Pablo I y reconfirmada e inaugurada por el Papa Juan Pablo II. Se celebró en la ciudad de Puebla (México) entre los días 28 de enero al 15 de febrero de 1979. El Papa, en su discurso inaugural¹⁶ marcará las principales directrices de la Asamblea: la verdad sobre Jesucristo¹⁷; la verdad sobre la misión de la Iglesia¹⁸ y la verdad sobre el hombre¹⁹.

El telón de fondo de la Conferencia de Puebla será, primeramente, el Vaticano II (1965), la Conferencia de Medellín (1968), la encíclica *Populorum Progressio* (1967) y la Exhortación apostólica *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), del Papa Pablo VI. Todo esto ayudará a los pastores latinoamericanos a la reflexión y al discernimiento, en espíritu de comunión y colegialidad, “con audacia de profetas y prudencia evangélica de pastores; clarividencia de maestros y seguridad de guías y orientadores; fuerza de ánimo como testigos y serenidad, paciencia y mansedumbre de padres”²⁰, para responder a la gran pregunta de fondo: ¿qué

significa verdaderamente evangelizar hoy en América Latina, de cara al futuro?²¹ Pablo VI ya había expresado tajantemente “la Iglesia existe para evangelizar”²²; e igualmente, había enunciado los contenidos de esta evangelización, sus destinatarios y las acciones a emprender. Todo este dinámico proceso será posibilitado, en Puebla, con el método analítico del “ver-juzgar – actuar”.

Los obispos, en Puebla, al igual que en Medellín, comienzan con una profunda mirada pastoral a la realidad latinoamericana, a fin de situar la evangelización en continuidad con el camino histórico que la Iglesia ha realizado en la vida de los pueblos y sus culturas. Esta mirada les permite encontrarse cara a cara con los rostros de la pobreza del Continente. Esta mirada tiene también por cometido examinar los principales aspectos del contexto socio-cultural en el que la Iglesia lleva a delante su proyecto de evangelización.

En este “ver” la realidad implica necesariamente “una mirada histórica”, para volver a leer los grandes momentos de la evangelización en América Latina (cap I); una “mirada socio-cultural” de la compleja realidad continental (cap II); una “mirada eclesial” al camino actual de la Iglesia en América Latina (cap III) y, por última, una “mirada crítica de discernimiento” de las tendencias actuales y las líneas proyectivas de una evangelización nueva.

Ante esta realidad continental que los obispos ven con los ojos de la fe, se preguntan: ¿cuál es el designio de salvación que Dios ha dispuesto para América Latina?, ¿cuáles son los caminos de liberación que El nos depara?. ¿qué es evangelizar? ¿cómo debe la Iglesia vivir su misión?

De aquí sus opciones proféticas: a) **por una Iglesia-sacramento de comunión y participación**²³ (CEBs); b) **una Iglesia servidora de la Vida**²⁴ (jóvenes, pobres e indígenas); c) **una Iglesia misionera, comprometida con una evangelización liberadora**²⁵.

Tales opciones, “exigen una Iglesia en proceso permanente de evangelización, una Iglesia evangelizada que escucha, profundiza y encarna la Palabra y una Iglesia evangelizadora que testimonia, proclama y celebra esa Palabra de Dios, el Evangelio, Jesucristo en la vida y ayuda a construir una nueva sociedad en total fidelidad a Cristo y al hombre en el Espíritu Santo”²⁶.

Puebla concluyó con una serena y profunda afirmación de identidad cristiana, eclesial y latinoamericana, íntimamente entrelazadas. Es el punto más alto de la autoconciencia eclesial y latinoamericana. La perspectiva latinoamericana se afirmó en una recuperación de conciencia histórica, en la exigencia de la evangelización de la cultura y de la piedad popular, en el amor preferencial de los pobres y los jóvenes, en el compromiso y esperanza por la dignificación humana y la liberación integral”²⁷, acompañada de una reflexión original, la teología de la liberación, como reflexión crítica de la praxis histórica a la luz de la Palabra, una teología con identidad propia y no sólo un mero remedo de las teologías del norte.

2.4. Santo Domingo. IV Conferencia General

La Conferencia de Santo Domingo se celebró en el contexto del aniversario de los 500 años de la primera evangelización de América; tuvo como lema: “Nueva Evangelización. Promoción humana. Cultura cristiana” y fue inaugurada por el Papa Juan Pablo II el 12 de octubre de 1992.

En Santo Domingo, los obispos latinoamericanos están desafiados, en términos socio-políticos, por la recuperación de las democracias en el continente después de las traumáticas dictaduras militares y de sus correspondientes ideologías (Doctrina de la Seguridad Nacional); en términos económicos, por la dominación imperial del neoliberalismo; y en términos eclesiales, el gran desafío del proyecto de la “Nueva Evangelización”, a partir de una “evangelización inculturada”, que considere la diversidad cultural y el pluralismo religioso de nuestros pueblos. En esta Conferencia, que encaminó a la Iglesia Latinoamericana hacia los horizontes del Tercer Milenio, los obispos hicieron opción por: 1) La inculturación; 2) El

protagonismo de los laicos; 3) Una solidaridad latinoamericana y mundial; 4) La lectura de la realidad a partir de los signos de los tiempos.

Los obispos en Santo Domingo retoman y asumen “con decisión renovada la opción evangélica y preferencial por los pobres, siguiendo el ejemplo y las palabras del Señor Jesús”²⁸.

Al igual que en Puebla, los obispos reconocen “el potencial evangelizador de los pobres”²⁹ y en cuyos “rostros sufrientes”³⁰ se descubre el rostro de Cristo. En Santo Domingo los obispos, nuevamente hablan y alargan la lista de los “rostros” de la pobreza: “rostros desfigurados por el hambre”; “rostros desilusionados por los políticos”; “rostros aterrorizados por la violencia”; “rostros angustiados de los menores abandonados en las calles”; “rostros sufridos de las mujeres humilladas”; “los rostros cansados de los migrantes”; “los rostros envejecidos por el tiempo y el trabajo”³¹. Todo lo anterior desafía la evangelización de la Iglesia y lo urge a una profunda conversión personal y eclesial.

Como en las Conferencias anteriores, Santo Domingo, hace una denuncia profética del pecado social de la escandalosa pobreza de los pueblos latinoamericanos, como “el más devastador y humillante flagelo”; como asimismo, enrostra “las diversas formas de exclusión social, étnica y cultural”, que cierran los horizontes y desconocen la dignidad de tantas personas³².

Respecto al gran tema de las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base, es nuevamente ratificada su validez en Santo Domingo³³; son destacadas como “célula viva de la parroquia” y como “comunidad orgánica y misionera”, llamada a vivir como comunidad de fe, de culto y de amor³⁴.

Otro tema importante que se vincula profunda y esencialmente a la evangelización, es la promoción humana. La Iglesia Latinoamericana, se pregunta en Santo Domingo, con las palabras de Pablo VI, en la Evangelii Nuntiandi (n.31), “¿cómo proclamar el mandamiento nuevo sin promover, mediante la justicia y la paz, el verdadero, el auténtico crecimiento del hombre?”³⁵; porque “entre evangelización y promoción humana –desarrollo, liberación existen efectivamente lazos muy fuertes”; vínculos de orden antropológicos y teológicos. En esta misma perspectiva, Santo Domingo, asume también el tema de la promoción y la defensa de los Derechos Humanos, como tarea propia y exigencia esencial de su misión evangelizadora³⁶.

Los obispos en Santo Domingo, en este camino de la continuidad y de la actualización del espíritu conciliar y de las Conferencias anteriores, dan otro paso, el de implementar “una evangelización inculturada”; será este aspecto el que definirá toda la Conferencia; una evangelización que asume con una gran sensibilidad la diversidad cultural de nuestros pueblos latinoamericanos, especialmente la riqueza cultural de los pueblos indígenas y afroamericanos.

La Nueva Evangelización fue el gran tema de Santo Domingo. La finalidad de la Nueva Evangelización es “formar comunidades maduras en su fe”³⁷, capaces de dar respuestas a las nuevas situaciones que surgen de los cambios socioculturales modernos; esto implica la tarea de suscitar una nueva y más profunda adhesión personal a Jesucristo y a su Iglesia en aquellos cristianos que han perdido todo fervor y energía en su vida de creyentes; bautizados que “han perdido el sentido vivo de la fe o incluso no se reconocen ya como miembros de la Iglesia, llevando una existencia alejada de Cristo y de su Evangelio”³⁸.

El desafío misionero consiste que Jesucristo llegue nuevamente al corazón del hombre y la mujer latinoamericanos; que el Evangelio toque sus vidas, su situación existencial y de respuestas a sus anhelos más profundos (EN 29); ellos son los destinatarios de este proceso evangelizador inculturado; no se trata de un nuevo proyecto expansionista de la cristiandad, se trata de un encuentro dialogal y abierto con historias humanas, con “rostros” concretos de la cotidianidad de nuestros pueblos; destinatarios, son también, dicen los obispos, “las clases medias, los grupos, las poblaciones, los ambientes de vida y de trabajo, marcados por la ciencia, la técnica y los medios de comunicación social”³⁹.

Entramos aquí a otro aspecto fundamental en esta trilogía temática que atraviesa toda la Conferencia y el Documento final de Santo Domingo, esta intrínseca vinculación entre Evangelización nueva e inculturada y la promoción humana. Volvemos a encontrarnos aquí con

la pregunta ya antes mencionada por los obispos, movidos por la reflexión de Evangelii Nuntiandi, ¿cómo proclamar el mandamiento nuevo sin promover, mediante la justicia y la paz, el verdadero, el auténtico crecimiento del hombre?⁴⁰.

Esta promoción humana, como una dimensión privilegiada de la Nueva Evangelización, cuyo fundamento está en nuestra fe en el Dios de Jesucristo y el amor al prójimo, tiene aspectos concretos a los cuales la tarea evangelizadora de las Iglesias locales deben hacerse cargo, como verdaderos signos de los tiempos: a) *Los derechos humanos*⁴¹; b) *La Ecología*⁴²; c) *El don de la Tierra*⁴³; d) *El empobrecimiento y la solidaridad*⁴⁴; e) *El trabajo*⁴⁵; f) *La movilidad humana*⁴⁶. Otros temas que aborda la Conferencia, como signos de los tiempos en la promoción humana en Latinoamérica, son *el orden democrático*⁴⁷, *el nuevo orden económico*⁴⁸, *y la integración latinoamericana*⁴⁹.

2.5. Aparecida: V Conferencia General

La V Conferencia de Aparecida se celebró en el Santuario “Nuestra Señora de Aparecida”, el corazón mariano del Brasil; las anteriores Conferencias se habían celebrados en Seminarios arquidiocesanos (Medellín-Puebla), auditorios de Colegios o Casas de Reuniones (Río de Janeiro, Santo Domingo)⁵⁰; Aparecida, en cambio, optó por un espacio contextual de religiosidad popular mariana, celebrativa y eucarística, rodeado de peregrinos cargando cada uno la realidad de sus pueblos; la plegaria sentida y devota entró en las aulas de reuniones de la V Conferencia; la religiosidad de los pobres puso realidad histórica y contingente a las horas de diálogo, reflexión y de discernimiento de los participantes en Aparecida; la espiritualidad mariana del Santuario agregó la sensibilidad y el calor en el desarrollo de las jornadas de trabajo.

En Aparecida participaron mujeres laicas, consagradas y consagrados, matrimonios, representantes de Institutos seculares, de movimientos apostólicos, organismos de ayuda, observadores, peritos, superiores mayores de congregaciones, sacerdotes seculares y religiosos, diáconos permanentes y obispos, un amplio espectro de participantes⁵¹. Un elemento importante a resaltar fue la participación numerosa de diversos representantes de las Iglesias cristianas hermanas presentes en el Continente.

Respecto al tema metodológico, Aparecida recuperó uno de los aspectos más significativos de la tradición eclesial latinoamericana y caribeña, el método del “ver-juzgar-actuar”, tan importante para las Conferencias anteriores, especialmente Medellín y Puebla. Resaltamos este elemento porque no es tema menor para nuestra tradición eclesial, ni tampoco una cuestión secundaria. En palabras del teólogo Brighensi el método, en cuanto ‘camino’ (odos), no es un mero instrumento al margen del producto final del trabajo sobre un objeto particular. No existe método independiente y neutral del contenido que es vehiculado a través suyo. El método forma parte del contenido. En cuanto camino es portador de una intencionalidad y, en teología, diríamos, es revelador de una determinada cosmovisión que incide directamente en los contenidos y, sobre todo, en el tipo de acción a la cual ellos apuntan⁵².

El método ver-juzgar-actuar ha posibilitado a la Iglesia latinoamericana y caribeña: primero, abrirse camino a la realidad compleja, diversa y conflictual de nuestros pueblos, para leer desde ellos las voces del Espíritu en los signos de los tiempos y para contemplar esas “semillas del Verbo” que brotan a los cuatro puntos cardinales de la rica geografía humana, religiosa y cultural del continente; segundo, confrontar esta realidad con las luces de una revelación contextualizada en el hoy de la historia humana y, tercero, extraer desde ahí, las correspondientes orientaciones y respuestas pastorales y misioneras para su camino evangelizador⁵³.

Es el mismo método inductivo ya presente en la reflexión conciliar de la Gaudium et Spes y que Aparecida recupera, no sin tensiones, entre una mayoría que lo reivindicaba y una minoría que se resistía⁵⁴; resistencia, que al no ser vencida, hubiese tenido como consecuencia

un vaciamiento de “realidad” en el discernimiento eclesial, nada más contrario a la praxis teológica-pastoral-misionera de la Iglesia latinoamericana y caribeña; el mismo Documento conclusivo deja explícitamente expresada esta opción metodológica y el significado que éste ha tenido en la vocación y misión de tantas Iglesias locales del continente (DA 19).

Aparecida y los caminos hacia una nuevo Pentecostés.



Aparecida es más que una Conferencia o la textualidad de su mismo Documento Conclusivo; ella es un nuevo soplo del Espíritu a las Iglesias locales de nuestro Continente. Hablamos hoy del “espíritu de Aparecida”; él significa desafíos de renovación, creatividad, fidelidad y apertura. Aparecida es más que un evento eclesial en el camino histórico de nuestras Iglesias, es la apertura a un “nuevo Pentecostés” capaz de generar nuevos movimientos, nuevos dinamismos y nuevos caminos de unidad en el horizonte de la misión.

Las temáticas que marcan la novedad de Aparecida y que nos sitúan en el horizonte de “una nueva pentecostalidad misionera”, son las siguientes:

La Vida

La vida en abundancia, la vida plena, la vida que Cristo nos trajo como gracia para todos, es un tema recurrente en el discernimiento evangélico de Aparecida; de allí aquella resonancia bíblica de toda la dinámica en el desarrollo de la Conferencia: “Yo soy el Camino, la Verdad y la Vida” (Jn 14,6).

La vida es aquí comprendida en todas sus manifestaciones: Aparecida habla repetidamente de “vida digna y plena”: “el sentido divino de la vida humana redimida en Cristo”⁵⁵; “la vida digna para todos los seres humanos”⁵⁶. En Aparecida, la misión de los cristianos se entiende como “una misión para comunicar vida”, que es el proyecto de Cristo, la oferta de una vida plena para todos⁵⁷. En la vida somos convocados todos los seres humanos, como un común espacio existencial y teológico para el encuentro y el diálogo, la fraternidad y la colaboración solidaria.

La vida se torna así una “misión compartida”⁵⁸, particularmente, en esta providencial hora en que los cristianos buscan caminos de unidad y de un testimonio fiel de discipulado misionero en comunión, a través de iniciativas conjuntas en los diversos campos de la vida social, pastoral y eclesial, comenzando ciertamente desde el más eficaz y testimonial diálogo ecuménico de la vida cotidiana⁵⁹.

3.2. El discipulado misionero de Jesucristo

Esta es una categoría misionológica fundamental que recorre todo el documento Aparecida y ciertamente un tema misionológico transversal en todo el discernimiento de la V Conferencia; de allí el título “Discípulos y misioneros de Jesucristo para que nuestros pueblos en Él tengan Vida”.

Aparecida, como hemos indicado ya en el capítulo anterior, no habla de discípulos “y” misioneros, esta es una gran novedad del documento, sino de “discípulos-misioneros”, dado que lo misional no es un agregado a la vocación discipular, sino esencial a su identidad cristiana⁶⁰; un modo de ser y estar en el mundo y en la densidad de su propia secularidad, en el “hábitat” propio de su Iglesia local. El discipulado es una gracia recibida; una vocación regalada y por ende, llamada a ser compartida con generosidad; en otras palabras, a ser misión; una misión comunicadora de vida. Esta dinámica de misionariedad, que saca al discípulo de toda tentación de intimismo e individualismo religioso, de “una fuga hacia un

mundo exclusivamente espiritual”⁶¹, es un signo claro de una “nueva pentecostalidad misionera” que Aparecida promueve en las Iglesias locales de América Latina y del Caribe. Esta vocación discipular no se agota en la intraeclesialidad católica, es don compartido con todos aquellos que han acogido en sus existencias la gracia trinitaria y bautismal; en este sentido, el discipulado es vocación y misión compartida desde una rica y desafiante espiritualidad ecuménica que busca dar hoy un testimonio común en el mundo, de fe, esperanza y caridad.

3.3. La misión permanente del discípulo de Jesucristo

La misionariedad de la vocación discipular no es una cuestión de programas o proyectos, es una identidad marcada y sellada por el Espíritu, como continuación histórica del “modus vivendi” y del “modus operandi” de Jesús, haciendo propia su pasión por el Reino, “testimoniarlo y anunciarlo de persona a persona, de comunidad a comunidad, y de la Iglesia a todos los confines del mundo (cf. Hch. 1,8)”⁶².

Esta misión es una tarea permanente de la Iglesia local, como promotora de la vida plena para todos; no es una misión reducida a un determinado programa o proyecto; tampoco es exclusiva y cerrada en su intraeclesialidad (tendencia centrípeta), sino que es abierta a la colaboración inter-ecclesial (dinamismo centrífugo), es decir, con otras comunidades cristianas y pertenencias religiosas, como asimismo, con otros organismos e instituciones nacionales e internacionales: la defensa de la vida, la paz, la justicia, la salvaguardia de la creación ,etc.

3.4. Los pobres: sujetos de una misión compartida

La misión de los discípulos misioneros, en el espíritu de Aparecida, será una misión de inclusión y de recuperación de la dignidad humana perdida de tantos que viven en la hora actual en este “mundo de la insignificancia”, el mundo de los pobres: indígenas, afroamericanos, mujeres, jóvenes, desempleados, migrantes, desplazados, campesinos sin tierra, enfermos graves, drogodependientes, etc⁶³. Ellos ya no son los meros objetos de la atención pastoral y caritativa de la Iglesia. Aparecida los considera y asume como sujetos activos y protagónicos de su propio camino en la sociedad y en la Iglesia; ellos son “sujetos de cambio y transformación de su situación”⁶⁴; ellos, igualmente, “se hacen sujetos de la evangelización y de la promoción humana”⁶⁵. La emergencia del pobre, como sujeto de la evangelización, es un gran desafío profético de esta “nueva pentecostalidad misionera” para las Iglesias locales: los pobres son nuestros compañeros de camino para una misión compartida, desde la vitalidad apostólica de sus Comunidades Eclesiales de Base o de sus “pequeñas comunidades de sentido”, rostros de una soñada “Iglesia de los pobres”, como lo expresó el Papa Juan XXIII, un mes antes de iniciar el Concilio Vaticano II.

3.5. Mujeres: las “mayorías activas” en la Iglesia.

Otro tema que emerge en el discernimiento de Aparecida es “la activa e insustituible riqueza del aporte de la mujer”⁶⁶; “su indispensable y peculiar participación en la construcción de una vida social más humana y en la edificación de la Iglesia”⁶⁷. Ellas son “las mayorías activas” en nuestras comunidades, primeras transmisoras de la fe y colaboradoras de los pastores⁶⁸; portadoras de aquel natural “genio femenino”, que no siempre los pastores han sabido descubrir, reconocer y promover en nuestras comunidades eclesiales, ni menos dar un apoyo más decidido en la asunción de ministerios eclesiales confiados a los laicos, como asimismo ofrecer una mayor consideración e integración de sus aportes específicos en las instancias de planificación y de decisiones pastorales⁶⁹.

La misión en AL hoy, se abre a nuevos horizontes, nuevos contextos, nuevos destinatarios y nuevos agentes. En América Latina y el Caribe los pobres, las mujeres, los indígenas y afro-americanos ya no son meros objetos de la atención evangelizadora de la Iglesia, ellos son los sujetos emergentes que desde sus respectivos mundos culturales comienzan a enriquecer la vida de la Iglesia y a dar nueva imaginación y creatividad a su misión.

A modo de conclusión

Podemos decir hoy que el Espíritu está hablando a nuestras Iglesias e invitándonos a buscar caminos nuevos de un fraternal diálogo de la vida y de la colaboración solidaria: desde el mundo de los pobres; desde la riqueza cultural de nuestros pueblos indígenas y afroamericanos, desde el dinamismo de las "pequeñas comunidades" y desde la valoración de la mujer y de su "genio femenino". Hoy como Iglesia Latinoamericana y Caribeña, podemos vivir la alegría de un común discipulado de Jesucristo, en el horizonte de una misión compartida por la vida del Reino, como una Iglesia de todas las edades, de todas las razas y de todas las sangres, que con sus manos abiertas comparte en el escenario del Iglesia Universal lo más hermoso que el Espíritu ha hecho brotar en su seno: la vida compartida, la fe celebrada con la alegría de los sencillos, la esperanza forjada con la sangre de sus mártires y la pléyade de sabios pastores y profetas, verdaderos padres de nuestra Iglesia latinoamericana: Larraín, Proaño, Camara, Landazuri, Romero, Girardi, Brandao, Pironio, Silva Henríquez, Alvear y tantos otros...

END NOTES

¹ Ver AG, 24; CD, 11; LG, 23; EO, 3.

² Ver EN, 63.

³ G. DOIG KLINGE, *De Río a Santo Domingo*, Bogotá, 2006, 22-23.

⁴ G. CARRIQUIRY LECOUR. *En camino hacia la V Conferencia*, Buenos Aires, 2006, 19.

⁵ E. PIRONIO, *CELAM, Medellín, América Latina. Reflexiones sobre el CELAM*, Madrid, 1977, 27.

⁶ C. DE LORA, *Iglesia para el reino de Dios*, Madrid, 2007, 13.

⁷ G. DOIG KLINGE. *De Río a Santo Domingo*, 43.

⁸ Ver PP 20-21

⁹ G. CARRIQUIRY LECOUR, *En camino hacia la V Conferencia*, 35

¹⁰ 1) Área de promoción humana: Justicia. Paz. Familia y demografía. Educación. Juventud; 2) Área de evangelización y crecimiento en la fe: Pastoral Popular. Pastoral de élites. Catequesis. Liturgia; 3) Área de Iglesia visible y sus estructuras: Movimientos de laicos. Sacerdotes. Religiosos. Formación del clero. Pobreza de la Iglesia. Pastoral de conjunto. Medios de Comunicación Social.

¹¹ G. DOIG KLINGE, *De Río a Santo Domingo*, 47.

¹² EN 19

¹³ R. OLIVEROS MAQUEO. *Antecedentes de la V Conferencia General del Episcopado en la tradición de latinoamericana*, en: www.obsur.org.uy/publicaciones/carta34 (14-12-2010)

¹⁴ JUAN XXIII, Radio mensaje, precisando los objetivos del Concilio Vaticano II, 11-IX-1962.

¹⁵ DM. Mensaje a los pueblos de América Latina: "alentar una *nueva evangelización* y catequesis intensivas que lleguen a las élites y a las masas para lograr una fe lúcida y comprometida". Subrayado nuestro.

¹⁶ JUAN PABLO II: Discurso Inaugural pronunciado en el Seminario Palafoxiano de Puebla de los Angeles, México, el día 28 de enero de 1979.

¹⁷ JUAN PABLO II. *Discurso Inaugural*, I, 2- I, 5.

¹⁸ JUAN PABLO II. *Discurso Inaugural*, I, 6- I, 8.

¹⁹ JUAN PABLO II. *Discurso Inaugural*, I, 9.

²⁰ JUAN PABLO II: *Discurso Inaugural*.

²¹ C. DE LORA. *La Iglesia para el reino de Dios*, 35.

²² "Evangelizar constituye, en efecto, la dicha y vocación propia de la Iglesia, su identidad más profunda. **Ella existe para evangelizar**, es decir, para predicar y enseñar, ser canal del don de la gracia, reconciliar a los pecadores con Dios, perpetuar el sacrificio de Cristo en la santa misa, memorial de su muerte y resurrección gloriosa" (EN 14). El subrayado es nuestro.

²³ Ver DP 1032.

²⁴ Ver DP 1303.

²⁵ Ver DP 1304.

²⁶ Ver DP 1305.

²⁷ G. CARRIQUIRY LECOUR, *En el camino de la V Conferencia*, 48

²⁸ SD 180.

²⁹ DP 1147.

³⁰ DP 31 – 39.

³¹ SD 178.

³² SD 179.

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- ³³ SD 63.
³⁴ SD 61.
³⁵ SD 157.
³⁶ SD 164-165.
³⁷ DM 26.
³⁸ RM 33.
³⁹ SD 26.
⁴⁰ EN 31.
⁴¹ SD 164-168.
⁴² SD 169-170.
⁴³ SD 171-177.
⁴⁴ SD 178-181.
⁴⁵ SD 182-185.
⁴⁶ SD 186-189.
⁴⁷ SD 190-193.
⁴⁸ SD 194-203.
⁴⁹ SD 204-209.
⁵⁰ Ver L. ORTIZ, *A la luz de Aparecida. Claves para su lectura*, Bogotá, 2008, 30-32.
⁵¹ Ver A. BRIGHENSI, *Crónica del desarrollo de la V Conferencia*, en: *V Conferencia de Aparecida. Renacer de una esperanza*, Quito, 2008, 27-33.
⁵² A. BRIGHENSI, *El Documento de Participación de la V Conferencia*. En: *Revista Misiones Extranjeras* 215 (Enero-Diciembre 2006) 681.
⁵³ A. BRIGHENSI, *Criterios para la lectura del Documento de Aparecida, el pre-texto, el con-texto y el texto*, en: *Revista de misionología Spiritus*, Año 48/2- n. 187 (junio 2007) 88.
⁵⁴ A. BRIGHENSI, *Criterios para la lectura del Documento de Aparecida*, 87.
⁵⁵ DA 35.
⁵⁶ DA 36.71. Ver también: DA 112. 125. 358. 359. 361. 364. 384. 464. 467. 469.
⁵⁷ Ver: DA 360-364.
⁵⁸ DA 384.
⁵⁹ Ver DA 232-234.
⁶⁰ Ver DA 144.
⁶¹ DA 148.
⁶² DA 145-146.
⁶³ Ver DA 65.
⁶⁴ DA 394.
⁶⁵ DA 398.
⁶⁶ DA 459.
⁶⁷ DA 453.
⁶⁸ Ver DA 455.
⁶⁹ Ver DA 458.

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FROM MEDELLIN TO APARECIDA

(Some reflections on the role of lay people and women)

The “unexpected spring breeze” that the Vatican II represented for the Catholic and other churches was also perceived and re-interpreted in Latin America. The continent of hope no longer wanted to be a “reflex Church”, but rather a “source Church”, that not only received and copied the European Model, but was able to create and process something new and, at the same time being loyal to the new proposals deriving from the breeze of renewal brought by the Council.

In the documents of Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979), it is possible to find such strong and vigorous attempts at renewal. The event in San Domingo (1992) represented a phase of perplexity about the direction the paces taken and the results previously obtained would have taken. Nevertheless, Aparecida (2007) enabled hope to be renewed and the fact that the Latin American Church had not only consolidated its achievements, but was able to conduct a mature synthesis was confirmed.

Medellín: the spring of the poor

The Medellín conference in 1968 – three years after the Council – had an enormous impact not only in Latin America but throughout the rest of the world. From the final document of the episcopate, a prophetic courage that reassumes the best of the Council and finds fertile ground in these places can be seen. The social injustice and oppression that devastated the predominantly Catholic Latin American continent, from Mexico to the Rio Grande to the extreme South, emerged with force in the debate and the conclusions of this conference, resulting in a gush of innovations in the manner of conceiving evangelisation, pastoral and theology.

In the Medellín document, one therefore notes that the poor part of the population had already been given a central role as the bishops had ascertained that it represented the overwhelming majority of the Latin American Church. And this would have brought about serious and inevitable consequences for lay people committed to the Catholic and the basic Ecclesiastical as yet in the embryonic phase of and identification by the hierarchy were the catalysts that enabled the principles of the Second Conference American Bishops to be established: Pastoral from the viewpoint of social undertaking a new manner of theology, departing from the unjust situation, the linking and uniting the around the Word of God and the new profile of lay people was therefore brought to the eyes of the continent’s Church. These were lay people no longer originating from the churches and ecclesiastical seats, but created and aggregated in the most remote and poor points throughout America south of the Equator. Lay people that indissolubly link their Christian commitment with the transformation of their situation.



people. The lay Brazilian Action Communities, their existence of the Church, three basic of the Latin-considering the injustice; making and turbulent communities facts of life.¹ A

In the Medellín document, therefore, one does not read the need of Latin-American bishops to continuously repeat the role of lay people, their identity and their mission. The Church, in dedicating itself to the outcast Latin American populations and placing the poor at the centre of its worries, already stated that the central subject of its Pastoral were the baptised Christians that spend their suffering daily lives inspired by faith and on the basis of

which fight for a better future, not only for themselves, but for all the populations and nations. Christian lay people, therefore, in which the Church is reflected.

Medellín, courageously, expressed itself so that apostolic groups were set up in operating sites or structures, “particularly in those structures in which the processes of freeing and civilising the society to which they belong are processed and decided, equipping them with an adequate structure and education based on the understanding of the signs of time, in the heart of events”.² With great boldness and farsightedness, the document added: “The groups or movements that already exist to continue these tasks must be strongly supported, and their militants must not be abandoned when, due to the social implications of the Gospel,³ they are subjected to compromises and painful consequences”.

Medellín unfortunately confirmed in prophetic words what then happened in many Latin American Countries. A large number of Christian lay militants feasibly involved in Catholic Action, but also in other ecclesiastical movements, encountered torture, imprisonment and death due to the concreteness and radicalism of their commitment to changing the current situation. In some cases, these young lay people, who risked their life for their Christian commitment, only met with timid support from the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In others, on the other hand, particularly in Brazil, the support of the same hierarchy was felt with courage and transparency, so much so that in a certain period of the country’s recent history, from 1968 to 1980, the bishops were the only ones to raise their voices through the press in defence of human rights.

The lay people, at that time, suffered the severe consequences of their commitment to the Gospel, as already mentioned in the Medellín document. However the obstacles did not decrease consistency in the Church’s overall fight towards consolidating the processes it had begun. The Puebla Conference, eleven years later, confirmed this.

Puebla and San Domingo: Confirmation and change of direction

The Puebla document resumes that of Medellín in many aspects. It confirms and recognises the strength of the application of the three guidelines of Medellín. The inseparability of evangelisation and the creation of justice that was now well defined: the preferential choice for works addressed to the poor and the theological works on the subject, beginning with Gustavo Gutiérrez’s pragmatic book,⁴ that abounded as the contents of the various courses existing in theology: Theology of Freedom, that intended to offer its own and qualified words to the process of freeing the continent’s poor, as well as changing the treating of theology from this prospective. Besides aggregating the basic communities already present in Medellín, involving thousands of lay people throughout Latin America, in particular in the poorest regions, around the Word of God and reflections on the faith ecclesiastical communities were organised that “reinvented” a new manner of existing of the Church. The CEB visited many regions in the continent where the clergy was short or almost nonexistent, soon becoming points for exploiting lay people around the Word of God and the creation of a Church alive and active departing from lay charisma.

According to the Puebla document, the lay people “are the men of the Church in the heart of the world and men of the world in the heart of the Church”.⁵ Its first task was to construct God’s Kingdom from commitment in the world’s situation. The document stated: “But it is in the world that lay people find their specific field of action. From their lives, their appropriate words and concrete actions, lay people are responsible for organising events in time and making them available for creating God’s Kingdom”. It then added the subject of social priority of the apostolate, so present in the documents of Latin American teachings: “Having said this, in the Latin American continent, characterised by serious problems of injustice that in time have worsened, lay people cannot relieve themselves of a serious commitment in promoting justice and common wellbeing, always illuminated by their faith, guided by the Gospel, the social doctrine of the Church and at the same time orientated by intelligence and the capacity for efficacious action”.⁶

This vision of laity, as the agent of change not only within the ecclesiastical structures, but also for social transformation, well known in the Medellín and Puebla documents, receives an important change in the San Domingo document, in which the lay people are declared protagonists of the new evangelisation. In this case, their identity as ecclesiastical and pastoral agents is reinforced, no longer as agents responsible for transforming their society. The conclusions of the IVth Conference of San Domingo evidence the lay people's protagonism in the new evangelisation, human promotion and Christian culture. There is a renowned affirmation from the San Domingo document: "That the baptised not evangelised are the main addressees of the New Evangelisation. This will only be effectively realised if the lay people, aware of their baptism, respond to the call of Christ so that they become the protagonists of the New Evangelisation".⁷ The San Domingo document further proposes to "encourage the organisation of lay people at all the level of pastoral structure, based on the principles of communion and participation, in respect of the "freedom of association of the faithful lay people in the Church".⁸

After having vigorously defended the faithful lay people's right to organise themselves, asserting that this was not a concession by the Church's hierarchy, but a right arising from Baptism and their call to communion, the San Domingo document stated: "The importance of the presence of lay people in the task of New Evangelisation that leads to the promotion of human beings and the spreading of information with the power of the risen Christ, allows us to assert that one of the priorities of our pastoral, the fruit of this IVth Conference, will be that of a Church in which the faithful Christian lay people are the protagonists. A lay state well organised with continuous, mature and committed training, fruit of the IVth Conference, is the symbol of particular Churches that have taken the commitment to New Evangelisation seriously to their hearts."⁹

Aparecida: partial revival and new synthesis

With regard to the three previous Conferences, the Aparecida document presents new elements as the starting point: the *oreicyoacai* with emphasis on the Catholic identity. This worry exists and is latent in the hearts of clergymen who worryingly see their flocks decreasing.

So that this situation can be fought t, the bishops meeting in Aparecida will identify the various ecclesiastical segments that could be involved in this process of reviving the Catholic identity in the continent. These must include the baptised, who form the majority of God's people, or the lay people. To be found in situations and places in society and the Church, they are the missionary disciples that, together with their clergymen and the other members of the Church (presbyters, deacons, and the consecrated), will be called by their Church and sent on missions with the aim of reviving faith in the continent.

The ecclesiastical and missionary renewal that the bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean desire and that is explicit in the document implies a Church where the hierarchy carries out its role of guide in the process well. The flexibility that the Council introduced with the concept of the Church of God's People is not very evident in this document. The model that permeates the document is present in the Council's ecclesiology: that of communion. One cannot however say that there is a net separation between this model and that of God's People, which was frequently mentioned in the Medellín and Puebla conferences. It could be asserted that for the Aparecida document the most important leadership of this renewed Church in the continent are the bishops and the clergy.¹⁰

Notwithstanding the above statements, it can be noted that the Aparecida document also dwells on the importance of the existence of responsible and well trained lay people in carrying out a important role in the process of renewal of the Church in Latin American and the Caribbean. These lay people, men and women, are mentioned and identified from the start of the document, linked to the exercise of their functions as "ministers of the Word, promoters of meetings and small communities".¹¹ Their self-denial and dedication as missionaries are praised, in particular in their participation in the *ad gentes* mission.¹²

One can however see a distinction in appreciating the work of these lay people, above all with regard to time order (O No. 99 f), in the extended paragraph that stresses the role that the social Doctrine of the Church, carries out in the training of lay people in the continent to encourage them to witness and act together. In this point, reference is made to the fact that the lay people in the continent "are ever more interested in the theological training as real missionaries of charity, and commit themselves to transforming the world according to the precepts of Christ".¹³ One can therefore note a double positive aspect of the operations of lay people in the history and growth of the Church: one regarding their insertion within the ecclesiastical structures ("they are ever more interested in theological training") and the other regarding the operations to transform the world ("they commit themselves to transforming the world according to the precepts of Christ"). The exercise of citizenship and ecclesiastical life will therefore be a combination pursued by the document in handling the identity, vocation and mission of faithful lay people.

Although there have been many discussions regarding the role of lay people within the structures of the Church (their clerical nature), there is a worry explicit in unequivocally strengthening the age-old character of the lay vocation (their citizenship). We believe that it is possible to assert that this second tendency is predominant throughout the document, if not quantitatively, at least for the emphasis given. The lay people, in the Aparecida document, appear above all as essential elements so that evangelisation can arrive where they arrive, or in time order.¹⁴ The document explicitly calls lay people to be trained to efficiently intervene in public life, "in particular in the training of the consents necessary and in opposition to injustice",¹⁵ It recommends the organisation of pastorals in the urban areas, to allow "the training of lay people so as to permit them to reply to the great questions and today's aspirations and insert themselves in the various environments, structures and decisional centres of urban life".¹⁶ It further proposes the training of lay people divided into specific categories: professional people, entrepreneurs and workers.¹⁷ It repeats the fact that they be trained in a manner that "influencing the centres of opinion, they can organise themselves and be auxiliaries in all the social actions".¹⁸

The Pope, in his inaugural speech, after having greeted the bishops, priests and seminarians, addressed a special greeting to the lay people, making their presence in the secular world known, a fact then repeated throughout the document. After having greeted the representatives of the ecclesiastical movements ("Dear representatives of the ecclesiastical movements") he greeted all "you, lay people, who carry the strength of the Gospel into the working and cultural world, into the heart of families, as well as your parishes!"¹⁹ The fact that the working world, culture and families were mentioned before parishes is important, as it demonstrates the direction taken by the document with regard to the identity and life of the Christian lay people in Latin America.

To a certain extent, the Aparecida document resumes that of the Council. It repeats in the same way that the place of the Christian lay person is in the world, renewing the time structures.²⁰ "The lay people in our continent, aware of their baptismal vocation, are those who must act as the fulcrum in the construction of a time city that complies with God's project".²¹

Nevertheless the dichotomy still evidently present in the Council's theology of the lay state, with the clear separation between the world and the Church, in time and spiritual, is one of the problems that must be overcome. And it was, if not overcome, at least highlighted. As a consequence, the dichotomy that assigned lay people the exclusive mission of transforming the world and the clergy the management of the mysterious and sacred was overcome in the post-council period by consideration by various theologians.²²

The by-laws of the Christian lay state will undergo visible and concrete changes in the ecclesiastical tissue, belying the theory that rapidly decreed that the lay people must only occupy themselves with the time aspect and not the sacred or spiritual. And so the lay theologians appeared and have taken their place. Men and women who have dedicated their lives to the study, teaching and research of theology; lay people, spiritual guides, that offer assistance and other things on the path towards the profound meeting with God and Jesus Christ; lay people who guide the Christian communities, organise rites and their celebration.

That is to say, Christian lay people that exercise a force of transformation on the world, operating from within the Church.²³

The post-council theology regarding the identity and the mission of the lay state is not therefore strongly handled in the Aparecida document, analysed here, as it insists on numerous occasions on the fact that the lay people must work in the world, in time structures, etc. The work of those lay people within the structure of the church is little recognised and when that does happen, it should be pointed out that this must be subjected to the supervision of the clergy. This means that the paradigm that governs the ecclesiology of the document is based on the conflict clergy and lay state and not on that which is expressed in the post-council theology with regard to the fertile interaction between community and ministries.²⁴

It is true that the document gives a great deal of attention to lay people, but, notwithstanding the fact that it is subsequent to the San Domingo document, it does not resume the richness of the previous conferences. In these the original lay state of working class layers is extremely enhanced and has taken, so as to say, the proscenium of ecclesiastical life of the continent. It carried out a first level role in the basic ecclesiastical communities in which it took part and contributed to the construction of a Church of simple and believing people, mainly built on reading of the Bible, the Word of God in comparison to the unjust and oppressive situation. The lay people that, according to Aparecida, represent the hopes of today's Church have a different profile: the profile of a better educated lay state, of a middle class, that links and unites the so-called New ecclesiastical movements.

The lay people and their method of association

The Aparecida document uses positive words and descriptions in its evaluation of the new ecclesiastical movements. These are called "gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church",²⁵ "a precious contribution to the creation of a Particular Church".²⁶ It says of them that "from their nature the charismatic dimension of the Church is expressed,²⁷ the possibility of seeing in them the presence and the sanctifying action of the Spirit".²⁸ The document further recalls that these movements have already been subjected to recognition and discernment of the Holy See and that they must therefore be considered as gifts and assets for the Universal Church".²⁹ Bishops are therefore recommended to integrate the richness of their charismas within the diocese pastoral and at the same time the movements are recommended to integrate themselves with the dioceses.³⁰

This positive effect of the new movements expressed by the Aparecida document derives from the fact that "in them, the faithful are able to train themselves in a Christian manner, grow and commit themselves apostolically until they become real missionary disciples, therefore exercising the natural and baptismal right of free association, as declared by the Vatican Council II³¹ and confirmed by the Code of Canon Law".³² It would therefore appear that the Latin American episcopate expressed in the document that we are now joyfully discussing, having found the appropriate points of training and growth of a lay state, that, in their opinion, can represent the hope for a considerable increase in missionary disciples for the continent. And so as in them an "opportunity that a large number of distant persons can have the experience of a vital meeting with Jesus Christ, and so find again their baptismal identity and active participation in the life of the Church"³³ is seen.

As well as all these characteristics, the document highlights the movements as a contingent suitable for the creation of pastoral action, involved in the fields considered a primary importance. Amongst these is the family, for example. Highlighted as one of the continent's pastoral priorities, the family should receive from the movements and the matrimonial associations, co-ordinated and physical support in the various pastoral needs.³⁴

The same happens with youth. The document, faced with the dangers that threaten young people today and the lack of the sense of life, proposes "stimulating the ecclesiastical Movements, with evangelising education aimed at young people, inviting them to generously place their charismatic, educational and missionary wealth at the service of the local Churches".³⁵

To operate in a high quality manner and one accessible in the apostolic fields that currently have a number of problems, the continent's Church hopes to count on the new movements. This is the lay state that appears to be the hope of the current ecclesiastical situation in Latin America. Hopes fully highlighted by the Pope in his inaugural speech: when speaking of the lay people, he mentioned only the new movements: "The faithful that belong to ecclesiastical movements are many, in these we can see the signs of the variegated presence and the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church and current society. They are called to give the world their Witness of Jesus Christ and be the ferment of God's love in society".³⁶

The new movements have, therefore, a primary role as on the other hand the lay people of today's Church have par excellence. Further the great hope placed in the above movements is evident, given the revival of the Catholic religion in the Latin American continent. Therefore, their training is the source of great worry by the clergy that witness "the lack of assistance to the faithful during the carrying out of their services with the society, particularly, in assuming the various responsibilities in the structures of a time order."³⁷ From the above, an evangelisation with little fervour and lacking new methods, with emphasis on ceremony, lacking a convincing training course, ignoring other pastoral tasks results".³⁸

From this comes the recommendation that "at the beginning of the third millennium the greatest efforts of the parishes must be constituted by the calling and training of lay missionaries".³⁹ Not only as students, but also as jointly responsible in the training of disciples and in the mission".⁴⁰ In order to live in full the vocation of missionary disciples, lay people need a solid doctrinal, pastoral and spiritual training and adequate assistance.⁴¹

There is however another type of association of lay people mentioned in the Aparecida document. Differently from the movements and association of a more parish, diocese and charismatic kind, this other type of association was formed and is formed by historical and life situations, in common and collective religious experiences. Their planning is the basis of society and the Church. Placed in a more disadvantageous situation in society, these associations, groups, communities find in the Gospel the strength to not lose hope and unite in the search for a transformation of the situation in the creation of a new ecclesiastical event. They are basic ecclesiastical communities, types of lay associations that underwent the great development of the 1970s/80s, recognised by Medellín and Puebla. The document refers to them on a number of occasions, even if in many cases in a veiled or indirect manner as compared to other associations or movements that are now the main acting force of ecclesiastical life.

The part of the document dedicated to the analysis of the ecclesiastical juncture (No. 99c), together with the list of the services carried out by the priests, the ministries assigned to lay people, the promoters of meeting and small communities, amongst which the basic communities, presents an identification of the ecclesiastical movements and a large number of specific pastorals. Reference to the CEBs is, therefore, placed at the same level as the other associations of lay people and are classified as "small communities".⁴²

In the same paragraph, in letter "e", the text positively highlights "a flourishing of basic ecclesiastical communities, according to the principles of the previous General Conferences, together with the Bishops and the faithful of the Church". The Puebla and San Domingo documents are also mentioned to fortify this.⁴³

In paragraph 5.2.3, the heart of the text that deals with the ecclesiastical sites for communion,⁴⁴ two excellent paragraphs are dedicated to the CEB, in which their characteristics as "schools that helped train Christians committed to the faith, disciples and missionaries of the Lord"⁴⁵ were explicitly praised. Here recognised and presented as an example is "the generous dedication, to the spilling of blood" of many member of the CEBs.⁴⁶ At the same time reference to the Church in chapter 2 of the Acts of the Apostles in which the regulations for ecclesiastical communities throughout time is recognised.⁴⁷ That is to say, the consistency of

their ecclesiastical nature is explicitly asserted, justifying their classification as *ecclesiastical* communities.

In this paragraph, the rich tradition of Medellín is regained, which recognised in the CEB “an initial cell of the ecclesiastical structure and centre of the faith and evangelisation”.⁴⁸ The profitable composition of Puebla that highlighted them as an ecclesiastical need, that which permitted the population to arrive at the knowledge of the Word of God, social commitment in the name of the Gospel, the appearance of new lay services and the education of adults in the faith is equally resumed.⁴⁹ Along these lines, No. 179 of the Aparecida document continues, which confirms the enormous service carried out by the CEB in enhancing the Word of God as the source of spirituality and the permanent desire for communion with the clergy. With a lovely and pleasing expression, the text declared them “a visible expression of a preferential choice for the poor” and also “the source and seed of various services and ministries in favour of social life and in the Church”.⁵⁰

Notwithstanding the above, at the end of No. 178, the document re-proposes the positive assertions regarding the CEB, stating having controlled “that member of the community that, attracted by the completely lay institutions or ideally established in them are not lacking and have started to lose the ecclesiastical sense”.⁵¹ No. 179 already recommended that the CEB operate together with parish groups, association and ecclesiastical movement, so contributing in reviving the parishes, rendering them a community of communities. It concludes with the clear warning that “in the efforts to reply to the challenges of modern times, the basic ecclesiastical communities will have the discernment to not change the precious treasure of the Tradition and teachings of the Church”.⁵²

Further the document insists in highlighting that “together with the basic ecclesiastical communities there are other valid forms of small communities, even networks of communities, life, prayer groups and those for reflection on the word of God”.⁵³ Great care is therefore highlighted in reinforcing the fact that the CEBs in the ecclesiastical panorama today are not the only or the first or the main form of community and association of lay people within the Church. In locating them besides and together with other ecclesiastical associations, it would appear to clearly demonstrate the desire of the bishops that the CEB integrate themselves more in a model of a Church organised in terms of parishes and movements.

It is not surprising that some groups closely connected with the CEB, popular Bible reading groups and the social movements have noted with a certain perplexity that the CEB are considered by the Aparecida text as a group or movement like others, amongst other things. A perplexity that is surely linked to the CEB's claim that, for decades, they have fought to no longer be only another group in the Church, but a new form of being the Church.⁵⁴

At the end of paragraph 180 there is an assertion that is repeated, in another form, in various points of the document: that of the central nature of the Eucharist in Christian life. In this part, it is stated that “all the communities and ecclesiastical groups will bear fruit to the extent in which the Eucharist is the centre of their lives and the Word to God will be the guiding light of their path and the operations surrounding the only Church of Christ”.⁵⁵ At the same time, in another point, the document asserts that “the situation of thousands of communities deprived of the Sunday Eucharist for long periods of time”⁵⁶ is a worrying sign for the Church.

Here the text refers to a deep wound, grudgingly noted by many CEBs: the impossibility to regularly celebrate the Eucharist. It is also true that this has developed the pastoral creativity of these communities, which have made the Word of God the great impulse of their lives and around which they organise lovely celebrations and para-liturgies.⁵⁷ The problem however remains. Whilst for the members of the new movements that live in urban centres, responding to the exhortation of the pastorals to regularly participate in the Eucharist, is feasible, for the movements located in areas where the clergy is lacking or almost inexistent, the problem is seriously aggravated.

It is a fact that many catholic communities do not have the possibility of participating in the Eucharist on Sundays, as there are no clergymen where they live. They are therefore

deprived of what is the central mystery of the Catholic religion, and the CEB are surely among them. The CNBB (National Conference of Brazilian Bishops), forwarded comments on the document of the Vth Conference in which the problem was faced with courage and daring and interesting solutions proposed. For example, it asserts that if "the Church carries out the Eucharist, the Eucharist is the Church". The fact that 80% of Brazilian Catholics are unable to celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays means that they are deprived of an important ecclesiastical dimension. It therefore suggested that the question of the ministerial nature of lay people and the possibility of married priests returning to the ministry be reconsidered".⁵⁸

The Aparecida document presents the problem, but not the solution. In paragraph No. 253 it asserts that those who do not have the possibility of celebrating the Eucharist on Sundays seek to participate with devotion in the celebrations of the Word and pray for vocations to priesthood. It therefore demonstrates that the path to overcoming this type of problem is still the traditional path and that the Church does not intend to introduce any important innovations in the set up and the search for alternatives to resolve this problem".⁵⁹

As regards the associations, communities and groups of lay people in the Latin American Church, it would appear that there is an attempt in the document to not leave out any of these groups. The text frequently refers to all and every one of them. However, when it describes the profile of the members of these groups and associations (their lifestyle, their manner of believing and celebrating, what is expected from them, their vocation, the mission to which they are called and sent) it appears clear that it considers the new movements and the small communities more intensely and deeply compared to the CEB. The lay people mentioned and described originate from real ecclesiastical situations, such as the parish, diocese or traditional and new movements. They may equally be persons who have turned away from the Church and that now seek the road to return. They are identified as persons in the urban areas and with typically modern and post-modern worries and problems, affected by the changes that upset current society and culture.⁶⁰

Without a doubt it is very difficult to recognise in this profile the lay people of the CEBs, the reason for whose general aggregation is their closeness and geographical and vital affinity. They derive from an economic, social, political situation, as well as a burst of faith. The need arises to aggregate to survive, not only spiritually, but also concretely and daily. In experiencing the meeting with Jesus Christ and His Word, a solid and creative synthesis is made between the hard and suffering reality in which one lives and the illumination that the Word contributes, therefore arriving at a new solidarity that indicates a concrete intervention and transformation of the suffered reality, shared with many others.

In any case, to conclude this reflection on the lay associations discussed in the Aparecida document, it is worth repeating with hope and joy the positive manner in which the initiatives of the associations of lay people are taken into consideration. When in paragraph No. 215 the text recognises "the value and efficiency of the parish Councils, diocese and national Councils of faithful lay people, as they encourage the communion and participation in the Church and their active presence in the world", the consideration with which the clergy see the lay associations appears clear. The great importance given by the Aparecida document to the movements and new communities in itself contributes to this positivity: the wealth of reinforcing the right of lay people to associate, organise themselves and think, act and decide together. The movements are ecclesiastical communities considered by the hierarchy as privileged interlocutors and this surely represents a step forward to the Church that hopes for complete communion and missionary status.

At the same time, the inseparable nature that the document seeks to give between the specific nature of the Church and social commitment is extremely positive. Again in No. 215, which concludes the section in which the various "ecclesiastical sites of communion" are listed, the text asserts in conclusion that "the construction of citizenship, in its widest sense, and the construction of the ecclesiastical nature of the lay people represent a single movement". Perhaps the CEBs can collaborate with the wealth they possess in this rich and joyful synthesis between life in the faith and social commitment.

Disciples to be trained and missionaries to be sent

One of the great worries shown in the Aparecida document regarding the lay people is the question of training. As previously mentioned, the need for a solid, valid and in-depth training for those who wish to enter the discipleship of Jesus Christ so that they can be sent to announce the Good News is repeated on a number of occasions.

The Vth Conference has many reasons for underlining this point. "It is a fact that without adequate training it is impossible for anyone to assume a real commitment in the ecclesiastical community. Equally, it is not possible to assume a mission in the world or in the Church without the right preparation. The training of faithful lay people to become disciples and missionaries is therefore of extreme importance".

The document is very clear when it states that a complete training of Christian lay people is necessary to reach this end. It mentions all the characteristics that this training must include: "doctrine, pastoral and spiritual" aspects besides "adequate assistance" so that the faithful are ready to give witness "of Christ and the values of the Kingdom in social, economic, political and cultural life".⁶¹

In describing the process of training missionary disciples, the document traces the steps of an itinerary that recalls to a large extent that of some movements.⁶² The emphasis in the *cherigma*, or the first announcement of the Good News, allows the origin and identity of the training project to be glimpsed. This is a training that as its starting point has the deep meeting with Jesus Christ, this being the start of Christian initiation. And the *kerugma* will give the track of the thread to the training process, that will shape the figure of the teacher in the disciple, through the subsequent stages: conversion, discipleship, communion and mission.⁶³

According to the text, this training must be continuous, growing and permanent. The disciple enters the "path" and must go through it without stopping, always seeking likeness to the Teacher and the service to the Kingdom of God and the Church. It is for this he/she will be trained and incorporated into the ecclesiastical community, when he/she will find his/her identity and place he/she belongs and communion.

The different characteristics of training listed by the document, human and community, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral and missionary, must respect the various processes and rhythms of each one and must also have as their central and essential element assistance to the disciples.⁶⁴ In this point the document resumes in a very positive manner the spiritual figure of the assistant and the assisted, very present throughout the Christian tradition, something that was left a little aside when more emphasis was given to living in a community as compared to individuals.⁶⁵

When one speaks of training, the fact that the document does not separate spirituality and mission appears to us equally positive. Notwithstanding this, it maintains the eternal dichotomy, present in many ecclesiastical texts, not only theological, between the spirituality of lay people and the other "priestly" or "religious" spirituality, etc.⁶⁶ Although much emphasis is given to the different situations of life, the prospect of communion that predominates in the document provides for a Christian and therefore missionary spirituality for all the members of the Church. With a clear assertion of leadership by the clergy, the document recognises that all the Church in all its levels is called upon to be a disciple and hear the Word of God; it therefore invites one to undertake a perpetual process of training.

The always forgotten question of women

In the Aparecida document, a reflection on the question of lay people cannot neglect the place occupied by women within them. Always and necessarily lay, as they have no access to the hierarchy notwithstanding the fact that they have been claiming their place in the sun in society and the Church for many decades, women are the expressive majority of God's population. The Church has always been able to count on them and they occupy important

spaces as in co-ordinating the communities, the liturgy, theological processing, spiritual accompaniment, etc.

In the first place, the conscious and respectful use of language throughout the document must be praised. It is naturally positive that an ecclesiastical document, permeated with a patriarchal tradition, took such attentive care in not referring to humanity and the human being without mentioning the two genders or sexes: man and woman. An extremely positive point for the Aparecida document.

One must however recognise that the part specifically dedicated to women is lacking. There are insufficient comments, for example, that recognise the aggressions and lack of respect of which women are victims and that affect their more essential rights. "Some, from childhood or adolescence, must submit to various forms of violence at home and outside the home: trade, rape, slavery and sexual harassment; inequality in the working environment, politics and the economy; exploitation by the press, that treats them as money-making objects".⁶⁷

The consequences of the changes occurring in the period in which we are living that cause structural changes such as, for example, the traditional acceptance of the social roles of men and women, are equally recognised. These, the document asserts, "seek to develop new approaches and styles in their respective identities, reinforcing their human dimension in daily life, the family and society, sometimes in the wrong way".⁶⁸

Women are equally introduced in the list of the people who approach the Church in paragraph No. 65, declaring themselves excluded due to their sex, race or economic situation. Assigned as a new social element, together with the African descendants, natives and others,⁶⁹ the document recognises in women the vocation to live alongside men in a reciprocal and complementary manner.⁷⁰

There is no shortage of long paragraphs in which reference is made to women in the family, in which they carry out the traditional role of spouse and mother.⁷¹ Similarly, an entire section defends the equal dignity between men and women, highlighting the fact that this is a central point of the Christian anthropology, as in time characterised by male chauvinism, Jesus' evangelisation made them disciples and the preferred receivers of his miracles and merciful actions.⁷² Resuming the Pope's inaugural speech, the document acclaims the overcoming, in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the "male chauvinist mentality that ignored the innovations in Christianity that recognises and proclaims the "equal dignity and responsibility of women as compared to men".⁷³

The continent's Episcopate recognises that "women constitute, in general, the majority of our communities. They are the first to transmit the faith and collaborate with the clergy, who must assist, encourage and respect them".⁷⁴ In recognising the importance of women as the bastions and foundations of the Church, as well as reinforcing and emphasising motherhood as the primeval mission, the document sees another meaning to this role, which is not only biological. It takes the responsibility of "sharing, guiding and accompanying projects to promote women as already existing social institutions, recognising the essential and spiritual ministry that the woman carries within her: receive life, accept it, nourish it, generate it, support it, accompany it and develop the female being, creating adequate spaces for life in the community and communion".⁷⁵

The pastoral actions that result from the analysis regarding the situation of women in society and the Church are profitable, although meagre, as far as the quantity of paragraphs is concerned. A pastoral organisation that renders powerful and enthusiastic the "female genius" and a wider protagonism by women is proposed; assistance to the female associations in situations of risk or difficulty; efforts with the authorities to encourage public policies that help women to reconcile domestic work and their presence in public environments and the labour market.⁷⁶

What presents itself as really innovative and opens a horizon for women is the assertion that it is necessary to guarantee their effective presence in the ministries assigned to lay people, "as well as the moments of pastoral planning and decision making, enhancing their contribution".⁷⁷ If there is a level to which women have never been admitted it is exactly this:

that of decision making. Always collaborators, but behind the scenes. Their official participation in decisions was minimal if not nonexistent. It is very encouraging that the Aparecida document proposes to include women in its decision making processes, who can do much in creating and collaborating in the construction of a Church more in keeping with God's heart.

CONCLUSION: HOPES AND PROSPECTS AFTER APARECIDA

Notwithstanding the fact that it is a positive document on the whole, one cannot say that Aparecida contributes to the questions that regard lay people with new intuitions and prophetic or innovative directions. In our opinion, no new path for lay people, who are invited to assume the most important part in the evangelisation and mission of Latin America, is opened. Other paths previously opened, are now, if not closed, placed on secondary level.⁷⁸ It is therefore a Church mainly centred on the hierarchy and clergy, the same, however, that intends to renew its identity and the Catholic mission in the Latin American continent.

There is an extremely positive care by the hierarchy in the territory regarding training and the consequent possibility of missionary actions by the faithful lay people. There is a clear desire by the bishops that drew up the document in it to overcome a model of the Church, in which the lay people have purely passive roles, without protagonism or pro-activism.

On the other hand, we believe there is something extremely rich in the conquering of the identity of the Latin American lay person even if their possibilities of transforming the Church and society seem to have been lost along the road. It would appear however that the native identity of the lay people of the continent was clearly defined, as well as that extensively indicated in the Medellin and Puebla documents.

A certain "Europeanization" of the profile of the lay person, a certain sophistication of the expectations given to him and a refinement of the vocational prospects proposed to him is felt. Obviously one should admit that there are some elements in the training of Christians that are universal and that today, more than ever, are extremely necessary, indeed urgent. This however does not remove that the Aparecida document leaves a certain nostalgia in the strong and prophetic language used to refer to lay people, without separating them from the poor, intending the Christian vocation common to all the Ecclesiastical segments united for the same common objective: service to the faith and the construction of justice.

Aparecida reflects, without doubt, the new Ecclesiastical movement in the period in which we live. There is more care for subjectivity, the moral, individual behaviour and personal ethics. Notwithstanding this, the new daily moral questions of Catholics in the continent, that afflict the hearts of the faithful lay people so much, wishing to live out their faith with all the consequences, still leave much to desire.

This regards sexuality, procreation, the family, the defence of life (abortion and euthanasia), and homosexuality: It is true that these questions that the Latin American Catholics face in their daily life are indicated in the Aparecida document, but still with too much caution. The lay people who expect more open and new words by the Church regarding these, without making any concessions to the moral preached by the Gospel, but with a opening large enough to be able to establish a fertile dialogue with the new generations, could remain frustrated.

Hope can be found, in our opinion, in paragraph No. 12, that represents a new key for reading the entire text. We would like to terminate our reflection citing it: "A Catholic faith reduced to a baggage, a list of some regulations and prohibitions, some fragmentary devotional practices, selective and partial adherence to the truths of the faith, occasional participation in some sacraments, repetition of the doctrinal principles, weak or severe moralism that does not arrive in the lives of the Baptised, would not resist the attacks of time. Our greatest threat "is the second-rate pragmatism of the daily life of the Church, in which everything apparently proceeds normally, but in truth the faith ends up with wearing itself out and degenerating into meanness". It is up to all of us to start again from Christ, recognising that "one doesn't start to become a Christian after an ethical decision or a great idea, but from

the meeting with an Event, a Person, that offers a new prospective of life and, therefore, a decisive direction".⁷⁹

If one takes the challenge of "starting everything again from Christ" seriously, anything can happen. The world can be renewed and also the Church. It is perfectly reasonable to hope that in this great renewing toil, for the promotion of which the Latin American Church proposes itself, the meeting with Jesus Christ, the Incarnated Word and Crucified and Raised Lord, the Christian lay people take part, the thousands of men and women that every day seek to live their faith and fervently desire a more brotherly dialogue and a more loving relationship with their Church.

End Notes

¹ See Medellín No. 3: Information and making aware: The Church recognises that the time institutions belong to a specific environment of civil society, even if created and managed by Christians. In the concrete situations, the Episcopal Conference believes it necessary to attribute a special incentive to the organisations whose objective is the human promotion and the application of justice. The moral and stimulating strength of the Church will be consecrated, in particular, to promoting such objectives and in proposing operations in this environment, as an addition and in emergency situations. Lastly, the IInd Episcopal Conference is fully aware that the process of socialisation, set off by technology and the press, and making them an instrument necessary and extremely suitable for social education and awareness, according to the transformation of the structures and justice in force. Therefore, in the task of human promotion, the lay people above all are called to act in an adequate manner.

² Medellín III, 3.1

³ Ibid 3.3

⁴ GUITIERREZ, G. Teologia da Libertação. SP, Lodola, 2000 (CEP original edition, Lima, 1971)

⁵ Puebla document II, 3

⁶ Ibid

⁷ SD No. 97

⁸ SD No. 100

⁹ SD No. 103

¹⁰ See the introduction and sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2

¹¹ See No. 99c

¹² No. 99 d

¹³ No. 99 f

¹⁴ See No. 99 e; f; No. 100 c; section 5.3.4 No. 209-215, in particular 210, 280 d; 283; 306; 400; 403; 406; 505; 508;

¹⁵ No. 508, resuming the Pope's inaugural speech No. 4

¹⁶ No. 517 h

¹⁷ No. 518 f

¹⁸ No. 518 k

¹⁹ DI

²⁰ See all the main documents of the Council on the question: LG, GS, AA

²¹ No. 505

²² We recall B. FORTE with the book A missao dos Leigos. SP, Paulinas, 1987; J.A. ESTRADA, La identidad de los laicos. Ensayos de eclesiología. Madrid, Paulinas, 1989, amongst others. Also see our comments in A Identidade crística. Reflexões sobre a identidade, vocação e missão dos leigos, SP, Lodola, 1998.

²³ See excelente libro by A.J. de ALEMIDA, leigos em que? SP, Paulinos, 2007

²⁴ See B. FORTE op. cit. and also by the same author A igreja icone da Trindade. Breve Eclesiologia, SP, Lodola, 1987, pages 30-32

²⁵ No. 311

²⁶ No. 312

²⁷ No. 312

²⁸ No. 312

²⁹ No. 313

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ AA 18ss

³² No. 311

³³ See the Pope's Inaugural Speech No. 4

³⁴ No. 437 a

³⁵ No. 446 b

³⁶ The Pope's Inaugural Speech No. 5

³⁷ No. 100c

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ No. 174

⁴⁰ No. 202

⁴¹ No. 212

⁴² The appellation "small communities" normally refers to the called new communities, very similar to the new movements. See book by the CNBB

⁴³ See Puebla Nos. 261, 617, 638, 731 and 940; San Domingo, 62.

⁴⁴ Section 5.2

⁴⁵ No. 178

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ See Medellín 15

⁴⁹ See Puebla 629

⁵⁰ No. 179

⁵¹ Puebla 630

⁵² No. 179

⁵³ No. 180

⁵⁴ See Extensive bibliography on the CEB in terms of theological sociological reflection. We mentioned only some examples such as the works of F. TEXEIRA, C. MESTERS, L. BOFF, C. BOFF etc.

⁵⁵ No. 180

⁵⁶ No. 100 e

⁵⁷ See CEBI, month of the Bible etc.

⁵⁸ See contribution of the CNBB with the participation document

⁵⁹ It is worth transcribing No. 253 in its entirety as it is an argument of great importance for the question we are discussing: "with deep pastoral affection, we wish to say to the thousands of communities with thousands of members, that do not have the opportunity to participate in the Sunday Eucharist, that they too must live "according to Sundays". They can nourish themselves of their already admirable missionary spirit participating in the "Sunday celebration of the Word", present in the Easter Mystery of the love that gathers (see 1 Jo 3,14), in the Word received (see Jo 5,24-25) and in community prayer (see Mt 18,20). Without a doubt, the faithful must desire full participation in the Sunday Eucharist, for which reason we invite them to pray for vocations to Priesthood".

⁶⁰ See Nos. 34, 37, 44, 397

⁶¹ No. 212

⁶² We are thinking of and referring in particular to the Neocatechumenal Path that indicates as a itinerary of Christian training, beginning in Spain in 1964. Fernandez, in reply to the directives of the IIInd Vatican Council, invites the opening of a path of initiation to Baptism that allows the meaning of being a Christian to be discovered.

⁶³ No. 278

⁶⁴ Nos. 208, 281, 282

⁶⁵ See U. VZQUEZ MORO. *A orientação espiritual e seu processo...*; Theography and Mystagogy....

⁶⁶ See No. 285: So the spirituality of presbyters, monks and nuns, parents, entrepreneurs, catechists etc is formed and developed. As our article "Estar no mundo sem ser do mundo" in (missing) criticises this vision.

⁶⁷ No. 48

⁶⁸ No. 49

⁶⁹ No. 75

⁷⁰ Nos. 116-119

⁷¹ No. 451

⁷² No. 451

⁷³ No. 453

⁷⁴ No. 455

⁷⁵ No. 457

⁷⁶ No. 458

⁷⁷ No. 458 b

⁷⁸ We refer to the vast works of ponderation on the popular lay people that were the basic Ecclesiastical communities and the entire movement of popular reading of the Bible, guided by lay people, predominantly women.

⁷⁹ No. 12

Dr. Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer

TEOLOGIA, MUJER Y DERECHOS DE LOS POBRES

(una lectura del recorrido latinoamericano)

*Para Maria Carmelita de Freitas FI,
primera dama de la teología brasileña
con "saudades" y gratitud....*

Dr. Maria Clara Lucchetti BINGEMER: ha recibido BA en Comunicaciones Sociales, Río de Janeiro, Brasil. Doctorado en Teología, por la Pontificia Universidad Gregoriana, Roma, Italia. Dra. María Clara Bingemer es actualmente profesora de Teología en la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Río de Janeiro en Brasil, y Decana del Centro de Teología y Ciencias Humanas de la misma Universidad. Dra. Bingemer, junto con su esposo el Dr. Einardo Bingemer, actúan como asesores de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Brasil (CNBB) "en temas de justicia para las mujeres, y la importancia de las personas casadas en el ejercicio de liderazgo dentro de la Iglesia y la sociedad. Ella se considera una experta en la espiritualidad laica y el liderazgo en la Iglesia, sobre todo en lo que respecta al nuevo modelo de Iglesia que salen de las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base, que han surgido en todas partes de América Latina. Dra. Bingemer es líder en el Movimiento laico de los Jesuitas, Comunidades de Vida Cristiana. También fue Coordinadora Regional de América Latina Asociación Ecuménica de Teólogos del Tercer Mundo del 1986 a 1992. Ella es miembro de la junta directiva de varias revistas de teología, entre ellas la REB (Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira), la revista más conocida de teología en Brasil y Concilium, revista internacional de teología. También fue del 2004 hasta 2008 miembro de la JAAR (Revista de la Academia Americana de Religión).

**Introducción**

El aire fresco de la emancipación femenina en el Occidente cristiano no sopló inicialmente desde las Iglesias. Fue desde el propio proceso de secularización y en el interior de luchas muy concretas y profanas (voto, salario, jornada de trabajo, sexualidad, derechos del cuerpo) que la mujer fue haciendo su "evasión" del espacio doméstico privado a lo cual se hallaba limitada en dirección al espacio público, actuando en las estructuras sociales, en la política, en la producción económica y cultural. La llegada de la emergencia de la mujer al mundo cristiano en América Latina no tiene más que cuatro décadas. Después del gran evento del Concilio Vaticano II, la voz femenina empezó a hacerse oír siempre más, reivindicando la ocupación de espacios adentro de la Iglesia y realizándola efectivamente. Sea asumiendo la coordinación de comunidades a distintos niveles, por el cuestionamiento de la imposibilidad de acceso al ministerio sacerdotal reservado apenas a los hombres, sea por el camino de producción de una reflexión teórica sobre la experiencia religiosa y los contenidos doctrinarios de la fe cristiana desde su propia perspectiva de mujer, el hecho es que hoy no es posible pensar la teología en nuestro continente sin tomar en cuenta la contribución de la mujer.

Este artículo pretende rescatar las principales etapas de este itinerario, buscando igualmente demostrar que a cada paso de crecimiento teológico en la trayectoria de la mujer latinoamericana estaba incluido necesariamente un impacto social de lucha por derechos humanos. Inicialmente veremos como en la fase inicial de su existencia, la teología hecha por la mujer en América Latina estuvo muy adentro de la llamada Teología de la Liberación (TdL), conectada a la cuestión de los pobres y de la lucha para ayudarlos a asumir su puesto de sujetos de la historia. En seguida, veremos como, en una segunda etapa, la mujer teóloga en nuestro continente, pasó a hacer una labor de relectura de toda la teología cristiana desde su

condición femenina y su experiencia de mujer, reivindicando su derecho a una diferencia que la autorizaba a pronunciar “otra” palabra teológica. En un tercer momento de nuestra reflexión, veremos como el avance de la teología feminista y de la reflexión sobre género va llevar una importante corriente de la teología latinoamericana a dar un salto y tomar nueva dirección. Veremos enseguida como la cuestión del feminismo y de los derechos de la mujer, en la actual teología feminista, va unida a la cuestión de la tierra y de la ecología, generando la tendencia teológica llamada “eco feminismo”. Finalmente, abordaremos la cuestión del empoderamiento de las mujeres, que conlleva muchas cuestiones delicadas pero ineludibles en el actual momento, tales como la corporeidad, los derechos reproductivos y la cuestión de los ministerios ordenados.

El alumbramiento: los pobres como cuna del quehacer teológico

La teología hecha por las mujeres en América Latina encuentra su fecha de nacimiento alrededor del 1968, cuando la conferencia de Medellín re-leía el soplo de inesperada primavera del Concilio Vaticano II en la clave de inseparabilidad entre anuncio evangélico y lucha por la justicia.¹

Los tres marcos de Medellín - la toma de conciencia de que evangelizar en América Latina supondría una inclusión de la dimensión de opresión e injusticia presentes en el continente; el pensar teológico sobre la fe haciéndose inseparablemente del análisis de la realidad atravesada por la injusticia; la aglutinación de las bases comunitarias que leían la conflictividad de la vida a la luz de la Escritura para producir nuevos hechos transformadores - abrieron caminos y puertas para que la elaboración del discurso teológico encontrara un nuevo sujeto como punto de partida: los pobres y marginados del continente.

Así, en los años 70, las mujeres latinoamericanas empiezan a aventurarse por los meandros del quehacer teológico a partir de la fuerte interpelación de los pobres y la opción por ellos que se va cuajando en la iglesia latinoamericana. En parte, su mirada y sus oídos se volvían hacia sus hermanas del Norte que venían abriendo la discusión sobre la posibilidad de pensar y hablar “más allá de Dios Padre” y del patriarcalismo dominante en la teología.² Veían como un fuerte y bello desafío echar a andar una teología que las incluyera como productoras y no solamente consumidoras.

Sin embargo, el nacimiento de una teología latinoamericana desde la perspectiva de la mujer nace inseparable de la teología de la liberación (TdL), y la opción por los pobres es constitutiva de su configuración.³ Las mujeres que entonces se inscribían en los cursos de teología y se aventuraban en la elaboración de un pensamiento propio sobre el misterio de Dios y su revelación no lo hacían impulsadas apenas por su deseo.

Claro está que en la raíz del acto de teologal había y hay siempre un deseo. Para estas pioneras, era un deseo imposible de contener y que, mayor que ellas mismas, las llevaba a osar lo imposible: aventurarse en un mundo hasta ahora apenas habitado por hombres y, en su casi totalidad, clérigos célibes. Un mundo, por lo tanto, donde lo femenino no tenía entrada siquiera indirecta, era éste donde las “locas” de la primera hora empezaron a hacer sus reflexiones y atreverse a dar sus primeros pasos teológicos.

Pero estaba igualmente el desafío de la realidad. Las mujeres que pretendían hacer teología en ese momento inicial tenían sus ojos vueltos hacia la realidad de los pobres y percibían que la teología empezaba a hacerse en estrecho diálogo con las ciencias sociales. Empezaban a percibir igualmente un fenómeno que más tarde se ha consolidado con el nombre de “feminización de la pobreza”.⁴ Una persona pobre que además de eso era mujer, venía a ser doblemente pobre. Su condición femenina se sumaba a su condición de pobre y marginada y la hacía más dura y difícil. Y fue así cuando una nueva solidaridad empezó a darse en AL: la de las mujeres teólogas con las mujeres pobres de las bases comunitarias. Las primeras auto comprendiéndose en cuanto portavoces de las últimas y responsables por la recuperación de sus derechos.

Los encuentros de mujeres teólogas y pastoralistas , en progresión reveladora y fecunda, fueron mostrando un rostro colectivo de pasión y compromiso por la lucha por la justicia inseparable de la construcción del Reino de Dios.⁵

Los encuentros entre mujeres teólogas se repitieron, a nivel nacional, continental e intercontinental. El movimiento por ellas realizado empezó a llamar la atención, a despertar curiosidad y a suscitar reacciones, favorables o desfavorables, portadoras de esperanza o demoledoramente irónicas y sarcásticas, sintomáticas de una cerrazón a la incómoda novedad que traían. Ecuménicos desde su comienzo, las teólogas latinoamericanas empezaron a vivir - además de la alianza con las mujeres de la base - una fecunda interacción ínter eclesial entre católicas y protestantes, lo que significó un enriquecimiento de parte a parte que construía bases sólidas para un futuro cercano.

La lucha de la mujer teóloga latinoamericana adquirió nuevo "status": de deseo y sueño pasó a ser realidad muy concreta de buscar y disputar espacio adentro de las facultades y cursos de teología, de perseguir larga y laboriosamente los grados académicos que les permitiesen mirar los compañeros hombres en pie de igualdad cordial, de percibir las brechas que se abrían y ocuparlas con capacidad y dedicación. Ésa ha sido una trayectoria de búsqueda del reconocimiento; de reclamo de presencia y visibilidad en espacios aún predominantemente o apenas masculinos; de intento de lograr ciudadanía y legitimidad para un modo diferente y "otro" de hacer teología. Un modo donde cabeza, corazón y entrañas se unen en fecunda y armoniosa danza cuyo producto es una reflexión diferente sobre la fe.

En los años 90 las teólogas latinoamericanas sentirán el impacto de la caída de las utopías y la crisis de la teología de la liberación que fue su cuna, con el absoluto predominio de las cuestiones socio-económico-políticas como eje de diálogo y fundamentación. Como todos los pensadores de ese momento histórico, tuvieron que vivir el dolor de ese momento y buscar reubicar su mirada y su método de hacer teología. Así lo hicieron, *fieles* a la intuición primera de que fe y justicia andan juntas y son inseparables; pero *creativas* para comprender que un cambio de época se encontraba en curso y que era necesario mirar a otras áreas del saber, como la antropología, la filosofía y aún las ciencias de la naturaleza para encontrar los interlocutores apropiados para su reflexión sobre el dato revelado.

Repensando conceptos teológicos desde la experiencia de mujer

Fruto de todo este inicio de camino fue un disponerse a repensar todos los grandes temas teológicos desde la óptica de la mujer. Es lo que Ivone Gebara identifica como un segundo momento de la trayectoria de la teología feminista latinoamericana. Momento este por ella denominado de "feminización de los conceptos teológicos".⁶ La presencia mayor de las mujeres en el espacio de reflexión académica hizo con que esas se dedicaran a feminizar conceptos teológicos que permanecían, sin embargo conceptos patriarcales. Buscaban una teología con rostro, con alma, con configuración de mujer, una perspectiva femenina de la teología, destacando la importancia de redescubrir las expresiones femeninas de Dios. Ahí empieza un momento más fecundo y sólido de publicaciones de mujeres teólogas, intentando visitar y repensar los grandes tratados de la teología dogmática y la misma Biblia a partir de su experiencia y de su sentir femenino.⁷

Por un lado la teología de las mujeres latinoamericanas se auto percibía debedora de la teología feminista norteamericana, sin la cual no habría encontrado el camino abierto para legitimar su itinerario. Sin embargo, percibía igualmente una distinción importante en su forma y contenido: no se movía primordialmente impulsada por la pelea por igualdad y lucha antitética contra el machismo. Al contrario, luchaba para construir un discurso inclusivo, pero donde la diferencia del hecho de ser mujer era un dato constitutivo e integral desde un principio.

Esa manera de pensar y construir un discurso teológico desde el ser mujer va a encontrar una legitimidad y aceptación bien positiva en la comunidad teológica. Las revistas, periódicos y editoriales que publican teología abrieron sus puertas y las mujeres empezaron a

poder ser leídas, discutidas y su reflexión recibida adentro de la comunidad teológica como un todo.

La manera de nombrar esa etapa del proceso evitaba la palabra “feminismo” o “feminista” por desear distanciarse del tono reivindicativo y antagónico de la teología hecha en otras latitudes. Se daba preferencia a expresiones como “teología desde la óptica de la mujer” o “teología hecha por mujeres” o “teología a partir de la mujer”.⁸

En esa misma línea iban las tesis doctorales y trabajos académicos de todo tipo. En el área de la teología sistemática se trabajaba la relación de Jesús con las mujeres, el rostro maternal de Dios Padre, el pensar de una Iglesia incluyente que tomara a la mujer como sujeto productor de bienes simbólicos y no consumidora pasiva. Una Iglesia alegre y participativa.⁹

Ese modo de hacer teología permanece hasta nuestros días. Y no es algo aislado del quehacer teológico femenino a nivel mundial. Encuentra afinidades en término de trasfondo con algunas teólogas europeas de la misma generación y se mueve entre los conceptos-clave de reciprocidad, unidualidad, relacionalidad, siempre buscando la interlocución con los teólogos hombres y con la comunidad teológica como un todo.¹⁰ La reivindicación de este tipo de teología no se alineaba más con un feminismo de primera hora, cuya principal lucha era por igualdad, pero sí por otro derecho: el derecho a la diferencia y la afirmación de la mujer como diferente, deseando ser diferente. Así es que esa teología – en diálogo incluso con obras de mujeres de otras áreas del saber¹¹ – recalca la identidad de la mujer como “otra”, “diferente” del hombre, y que quiere permanecer siéndolo, incluso en la manera de sentir y pensar a Dios, produciendo una teología otra que la del feminismo que se auto comprendía más en dependencia con la teología hecha desde el paradigma de la igualdad.

Hubo una corriente de teólogas latinoamericanas que sintió necesidad de dar un paso más allá de ese discurso de la diferencia y de la reciprocidad. Entendían que no estaba presente en esa fase y en ese modo de hacer teología una crítica más fundamental y radical al concepto de Dios y al concepto que se tiene de la identidad de la mujer. Esta actitud, presidiendo y conllevando un modo específico de hacer teología guarda entonces, según esa corriente, una visión equivocada de la identidad femenina. Refuerza el estereotipo del femenino como maternal, sensible, débil, creado. Eso generó una insatisfacción en el seno mismo del movimiento feminista.

Y adentro de ese movimiento, en las discusiones sobre este tema de la identidad femenina, se caminaba en dos direcciones: 1. una que insistía en la afirmación de la diferencia y 2. otra que buscaba desideologizar estas diferencias, destacando en ellas el papel de la cultura y de la historia en las cuales surgieron, a partir de las cuales actúan y adentro de las cuales siguen siendo mantenidas. Estas cuestiones permanecen y van a ser expresas y trabajadas de forma más incisiva en la etapa que se sigue, en la cual la categoría y sobre todo la perspectiva de género va a asumir un lugar protagónico.

Tomando en serio la perspectiva de género

La teología feminista latinoamericana tuvo que defrontarse, a partir de la segunda mitad de los años 90, con algunos desafíos importantes. El proceso de madurez por que tendrá que pasar debido a las interpelaciones de la historia y de la cultura la hará rever algunos de sus presupuestos. Y uno de ellos es que sería fundamental superar el descompás existente con la marcha acelerada de la teología feminista hecha en otras latitudes o aún con la reflexión feminista hecha aquí en otras áreas del saber.¹² Y la convicción de que el feminismo, las teorías de género y la teología feminista no podrían más ser ignoradas y urgía tomarlos en serio, “conocer sus raíces en su debido contexto, captar sus varios significados, seguir su trayectoria histórica y comprender sus diversas formas de expresión” era un imperativo ineludible.¹³

En esa etapa entonces, las teólogas hemos sido desafiadas a replantear las cuestiones de la identidad femenina, de la antropología, de la cosmología y de la teología que sostienen el discurso patriarcal. La Teología Feminista supone un cambio radical no solamente en la manera

de pensar el dato de la Revelación y el texto de las Escrituras, sino también y no menos en la forma de pensar el mundo, las relaciones entre las personas con la naturaleza y la divinidad.

Apareció claro para las nuevas generaciones de teólogas no ser posible más una teología de remiendos, de reciclaje de lo antiguo, sin dar lugar al parto del nuevo que ansiaba por venir a la luz.. En la Teología Feminista – que ahora ya no tenía miedo a darse ese nombre - se pretendió entonces traer preguntas fundamentales que cuestionan la estructura misma del pensamiento teológico elaborado hasta entonces. No se trataba más de una teología desde la ótica o la perspectiva de la mujer, que se presentaría como añadidura o como capítulo aparte de la teología oficial, hecha hasta ahora por los teólogos hombres. Sería y es un cuestionamiento de fondo al conjunto de la teología dominante, patriarcal y machista.¹⁴

Es así como las mujeres teólogas latinoamericanas se han dispuesto a dialogar con las autoras que habían consagrado nuevos métodos de trabajar con la Biblia, con la Revelación, con el dogma. Y sobretodo han seguido los pasos que su primordial pertenencia - la teología de la liberación – ha dado.¹⁵ En cuanto la TdL ensanchaba el abanico de su interés hacia otros temas que no eran apenas los estrictamente socio-económico-políticos, y empezaba a trabajar sobre ecología, cultura, crisis de la modernidad, género, raza y etnia, la teología feminista latinoamericana encontraba en la perspectiva de género un ángulo más adecuado desde donde construir su reflexión y su discurso.¹⁶ O sea, no se perdería en nada la perspectiva de inclusión de los que están al margen de la sociedad y del progreso. Al contrario, esa problemática seguía, más que nunca quizás, desafiando e interpelando a la teología. Los pobres que constituían los sujetos teológicos por excelencia de la teología latinoamericana de los años 70 y 80 ahora eran identificados como “excluidos”. Pero esos “excluidos” de todo beneficio traído por el progreso y el bienestar ahora tenían y tienen rostros más diversificados que antes y forman un mosaico de riqueza mucho más grande y compleja que por su vez desafía la teología en múltiples direcciones.

I. GEBARA, una de las grandes responsables por las elaboraciones encontradas en esa nueva etapa, va a afirmar que “La Teología de la Liberación, que ofrece una visión más colectiva de Dios y enfatiza la naturaleza social del pecado, no alteró la antropología y la cosmología patriarcales en las cuales se basa el Cristianismo”.¹⁷ Con eso, entendemos que la autora quiere decir que la lucha por liberación socio-económico-política con la cual la TdL pretendía colaborar con la aportación de una palabra específica y diferente, no contempló ni alcanzó con su esfuerzo otras exclusiones, igualmente necesitadas de liberación, como por ejemplo, la opresión de la mujer, la exclusión sexual y de género, así como las exclusiones raciales y étnicas.

Sería necesario, por consiguiente, un nuevo paso, un salto de calidad en otra dirección a fin de lograr esa liberación por la cual espera la mitad de la humanidad, compuesta por mujeres. Así es como I. GEBARA definirá el salto que la teología feminista está prestes a dar: “...hablar de Dios y de la cuestión de GÉNERO es hacer una doble afirmación: en primer lugar, es afirmar que lo que decimos de Dios está conectado a nuestras experiencias históricas, a nuestra vivencia; después, que nuestra misma idea de Dios, así como nuestra relación con él/ella o con su misterio, viene marcada por lo que llamamos...”construcción social y cultural del GENERO”.¹⁸

Es así como las luchas más propiamente feministas, tan presentes en la teología del primer mundo, y presentes también aquí en América Latina en el campo de las ciencias sociales y humanas¹⁹, empezaron a interesar igualmente las teólogas. Temas como corporeidad, sexualidad, moral, con todas sus candentes y delicadas cuestiones sobre derechos reproductivos y todo lo que concierne a la moral cristiana en cuanto al misterio del cuerpo humano, sus funciones, su vocación, su misterio creado por Dios, pasaron a integrar la agenda de la teología feminista latinoamericana. En ese campo, hay que reconocer que las teólogas protestantes dieron más pasos que las católicas. Eso se debe, naturalmente, a la estructura eclesial en los medios evangélicos, bien diferente de aquella presente en los medios católicos.²⁰

Así también hay toda la apertura del área eco feminista que es asumida a nivel del continente.²¹ En América Latina todavía son pocas las teólogas que tienen una producción digna de nota sobre en clave eco feminista.²² Sin embargo, la apertura y la atención a esa

nueva área interdisciplinaria de reflexión ha permitido a la teología feminista latinoamericana dialogar con toda la reflexión ambiental, o sea, con la filosofía, las ciencias sociales, el derecho ambiental, etc. Sin duda, es un área que promete un gran crecimiento para el futuro.

Toda la reflexión sobre la ecología en cuantos derechos de la tierra y de la naturaleza va empalmada con la reflexión sobre los derechos de la mujer en cuanto forma de opresión aún vigente y presente en la sociedad y en la Iglesia. En la medida en que el eco feminismo significa el fin de todas las formas de dominación, la teología no puede estar fuera de él. Y en ella, la teología feminista, que sigue haciéndose en la clave de la liberación de todas formas de opresión y lucha por derechos no respetados.²³

Teología feminista y derechos del cuerpo

La reflexión teológica sobre el cuerpo sexuado de la mujer también es un tema siempre más importante para la teología feminista y la reflexión sobre el género en el quehacer teológico latinoamericano. En un universo donde la corporeidad visible es macizamente masculina, la mujer entra como elemento perturbador. Y esa “perturbación” se da, más que nada, a través de su corporeidad que, siendo “otra” que la del hombre, exprime y señala la experiencia de Dios, el pensar y hablar sobre Dios de manera otra y propia. El cuerpo femenino es la condición de posibilidad del camino por el cual la mujer viene a ser una interpelación importante cuando se habla de espiritualidad, mística y teología. Este cuerpo que, sin embargo, ha sido muchas veces la fuente de la discriminación que la propia mujer sufrió y sufre en la Iglesia.

La reflexión teológica sobre este tema va constatando que la mayor discriminación contra las mujeres adentro de la Iglesia parece decir respeto a algo más profundo y mucho más serio del que simplemente la fuerza física, la formación intelectual o la capacidad de trabajo. La Iglesia aún es muy fuertemente configurada por la calidad secular del patriarcalismo, tan presente en la tradición judaico-cristiana. El patriarcalismo subraya la superioridad del hombre no apenas por un *bies* intelectual o práctico, pero de lo que llamaríamos un *bies ontológico*. O sea, las mujeres son oprimidas por su propia constitución corpórea y la teología feminista busca superar esa discriminación en su discurso.²⁴

Adentro del hito de esta discriminación corporal, hay una asociación muy fuerte – en el terreno teológico – con el hecho de la mujer ser considerada responsable por la entrada del pecado en el mundo, y por la muerte como consecuencia del pecado. Eso que fue incluso denunciado oficialmente por el Papa Juan Pablo II en su encíclica “*Mulieris Dignitatem*” permanece al fondo de mucho de la situación de la mujer en la Iglesia.²⁵ Por eso, las experiencias místicas de muchas mujeres fueron muchas veces miradas con desconfianza y sospecha, con severa y estricta vigilancia de varones encargados de controlarlas y exorcizarlas. Muchas experiencias místicas riquísimas de mujeres verdaderamente agraciadas por Dios con comunicaciones muy íntimas permanecieron ignoradas en un universo donde las vías de divulgación permanecen en las manos de unos pocos y donde casos como lo de una Teresa de Ávila son las excepciones que confirman la regla.

A lo largo de la historia de la Iglesia, la mujer fue mantenida a una prudente distancia del sagrado y de todo cuanto lo cerca, así como de la liturgia y de los bártulos rituales, y de la mediación directa con Dios. Todo eso, evidentemente, requiere un cuerpo “puro” y es grande la desconfianza de se la mujer realmente lo tiene. A pesar de todos los avances y progresos que han sido hechos en la participación de la mujer a muchos niveles de la vida eclesial, aún continúa pesando sobre ella el estigma de ser la seductora inspiradora de miedo, fuente de pecado para la castidad del hombre y el celibato del clero. Entre la mujer y el misterio difícil y raramente se reconoció y legitimó una sintonía en tenemos de la “alta” mística, de las experiencias más profundas de Dios, quedándole más el campo de las devociones menores y de menos importancia.

Esto es un dato bastante terrible, que demanda una reflexión muy seria adentro de la Iglesia. Pues, si es posible luchar contra la discriminación intelectual (por el acceso a los estudios y a la formación), contra la injusticia profesional (¿intentando mostrar capacidad y especializándose), qué se hace con la propia corporeidad? Más que esto: ¿deberían las

mujeres negar o ignorar su propio cuerpo, su especial y original cuerpo creado por Dios a fin de capacitarse a ser dignas de entrar en comunicación profunda con el Creador y ocupar su espacio adentro de la Iglesia? Esa es una temática aún muy verde en términos teológicos en AL, pero que deberá llamar cada vez más la atención de las mujeres teólogas en un futuro no muy lejano.

La teología, volviéndose a esa preocupación, está de hecho dialogando con el pensamiento sobre género producido por la sociedad. Ya desde hace mucho tiempo que el pensamiento feminista viene planteando cuestiones conectadas al cuerpo de la mujer. No solamente el clásico tema de la violencia contra la mujer, que ha incluso dado cabida a toda una serie de iniciativas prácticas de derechos humanos e instancias políticas y jurídicas²⁶ sino también toda la cuestión de los derechos reproductivos que reivindican la autonomía para la mujer sobre su propio cuerpo en lo que dice respeto al ejercicio de la sexualidad y a la reproducción, embarazo, etc.²⁷

Es sin duda un terreno muy delicado y difícil, pero no por eso menos importante. La teología feminista está cada vez más convocada a actuar ahí, y en ella sobretodo la teología moral. Algunos trabajos de teólogas morales latinoamericanas abren camino.²⁸ Pero forzoso es decir que se trata de un campo donde todavía hay mucho que avanzar, con fidelidad creativa y sobretodo osadía.

Teología feminista, poder y servicio: la hora del empoderamiento?

La palabra “empoderamiento” (empowerment) ha entrado recientemente en el universo teológico feminista latinoamericano. Pero parece haber venido para quedarse.²⁹ Cuando se habla de delegar poder, capacitar para actuar con más autoridad, descentralizar, no se puede menos que pensar en la mujer. El dar poder a la mujer viene siendo un hecho en la sociedad y las ciencias humanas y sociales han reflexionado y dado voz a este hecho.³⁰

La teología feminista en todas las latitudes, incluso en América Latina, también se vuelve sobre esa categoría incorporándola en su pensar y su discurso.³¹ Hablar teológicamente de poder, empoderar, dar poder, etc., implicará necesariamente hablar de la cuestión de la mujer y los ministerios eclesiales.

La cuestión de los ministerios es una cuestión crucial para los cristianos comprometidos de hoy. Dentre estos, particularmente la mujer – siempre y necesariamente lega, ya que no tiene acceso a los ministerios ordenados – si sienta interpelada y en el epicentro de un conflicto que la confina apenas a un cierto número de servicios en la Iglesia. Todas las mujeres envueltas a fondo y de manera radical en la pasión por la construcción del Reino de Dios y dedicadas con radicalidad al servicio eclesial sienten cotidianamente como aguijón en su propia carne el hecho de pertenecer a una Iglesia que no ordena mujeres y que no pretende hacerlo ni a corto ni a medio plazo. El hecho de ese impedimento por un lado y las enormes necesidades de las comunidades a quienes esas mujeres dedican sus vidas son por ellas apasionadamente sentidas y sufridas. Al mismo tiempo, por otro lado, en medio a ése estado de cosas, el Espíritu va mostrando a esas mujeres como es apremiante una ponderación y una práctica que atienda conteste a los deseos del pueblo de Dios en este particular.³²

El nuevo paradigma eclesial, que sustituye una Iglesia centrada sobre la contraposición clero-laicado por una comunidad constantemente reinventada y redimensionada por los carismas y ministerios abundantemente suscitados por el Espíritu en su medio va a permitir a las mujeres de hoy encontrar espacio para caminar en el deseo y en la efectivación de un real y mayor servicio al pueblo de Dios.

En la década de 80, cuando ya maduraban los frutos del Concilio Vaticano II y la Iglesia de América Latina asimilaba en mayor hondura las conclusiones de las Conferencias de Medellín y Puebla, las mujeres comenzaron efectivamente a atreverse a contestar a una situación eclesial que clamaba por una presencia su más visible y efectiva junto al pueblo de Dios. Así es que muchas de ellas, religiosas o legas, fueron asumiendo progresivamente ministerios varios en las comunidades. Desde la coordinación de las comunidades hasta las celebraciones litúrgicas de la Palabra, fueron incontables los servicios prestados por estas

mujeres, adelante de comunidades , viviendo un modelo de Iglesia donde poderlo era más libremente compartido y las decisiones tomadas más conjunta y colegiadamente.

Esta ocupación de un espacio que se encontraba abierto posibilitada por el proceso que iba delineando un nuevo paradigma para la Iglesia, fue altamente positiva y muy bien aceptada por el pueblo. La década de 90 continuó profundizando esta pista abierta y buscando caminos fecundos, aunque ni siempre fáciles, para ensanchar el espectro de las conquistas posibles y promisorias que irían haciendo siempre más con que la mujer cristiana encontrase un camino ministerial que pasase por adentro del espacio eclesial . Los servicios que la mujer pasó a prestar más recientemente dan igualmente testimonio del salto cualitativo acontecido en su conciencia eclesial y del “nuevo” que se procesa en ella y a partir de ella con la fuerza del Espíritu que la mueve y a impulsa a servir.

La Conferencia Episcopal de Brasil lo reconoce explícitamente en su aporte al documento de participación para la conferencia de Aparecida.³³ Y el mismo documento de Aparecida menciona la importancia que tiene la mujer en los diferentes servicios eclesiales, mencionando por primera vez que ella debe acceder a los niveles de decisión en la Iglesia.³⁴

Quizá esté ahí un rico veno para la renovación de la reflexión del horizonte de futuro del camino ministerial de la mujer. En la estela de la reflexión sobre el empoderamiento, quizás la teología feminista pueda encontrar caminos nuevos para que la mujer encuentre formas de vivir ese poder siempre más como servicio a Dios y a su pueblo.

Para eso, ciertamente ayudará profundizar siempre más en un veno que parece crecer paulatinamente adentro de la teología feminista latinoamericana: el rescate de las testigos históricas que alumbran el camino, el desentrañar de la teología contenida adentro de sus vidas, experiencias y pensamientos. Cada vez más se encuentran mujeres (y hombres) teólogas que elijen como campo de su reflexión teológica las biografías y escritos de grandes místicas de ayer y de hoy, maravillas de la irrupción del Espíritu de Dios en la historia, siempre subversivas con relación a lo establecido, constantemente entrando en conflicto con una institución que muchas veces les estrecha el carisma y la experiencia, pero aportando incluso a esta institución la novedad del Espíritu que nunca se repite.³⁵

Es seguramente una manera de “empoderar” las mujeres tornar cada vez más conocidos esos paradigmas personales que desde una profunda y radical experiencia de lo divino visibilizan la libertad soberana y siempre inventiva del poder del Dios que crea y recrea sin cesar el mundo y la humanidad. Hacer siempre más una teología de testigos más que una teología de textos puede ser un rico desafío para la teología feminista latinoamericana en su intento de rescatar los derechos de las mujeres invisibilizadas y enmudecidas por la opresión de la sociedad y de todas las instituciones.³⁶

Conclusión:

La teología feminista latinoamericana se encuentra en un momento rico y prometedor. El mismo hecho que proyectos como Teologanda y tantos otros programas de post grado y líneas de investigación sobre este tema estén vivos, fuertes y en pleno crecimiento es un potente signo de eso.

Una cosa, en todo caso, es clara. La reflexión teológica de las mujeres latinoamericanas tiene un largo camino por delante. Ese camino, si bien es llamado a darse en comunión con las compañeras de otras latitudes, en aprendizaje amigo y fértil reciprocidad, tendrá siempre su marca original.

Todas las nuevas temáticas que se presentan y que intentamos identificar en ese artículo pueden consistir y provenir de una agenda externa, pero si son asumidas, deberán serlo desde la identidad y las configuraciones propias del lugar desde donde se habla y se piensa. Y ese lugar, para las teólogas latinoamericanas, no puede menos que ser su continente, con rasgos y problemáticas tan específicas.

Coherente con sus primeros momentos, la teología feminista latinoamericana seguirá siendo, como hasta aquí, la reflexión a partir de la fe sobre la identidad y el ser de las mujeres, su condición, su cuerpo, su configuración, su sentir , su pensar y su discurso . Y

dándose en un contexto marcado por la conflictividad y la injusticia, no podrá menos que ser una reflexión sobre una eclesialidad inseparable de una ciudadanía que siempre e incansablemente une el binomio fe y justicia y entiende teología como palabra humana alumbrada por la Palabra de Dios con la finalidad de contribuir a un mundo más humano, en donde los derechos humanos sean más respetados y vividos.

¹ Discordamos aquí de la periodización que hace M. C de FREITAS, en su introducción al libro *Género e Teologia. Interpelações e perspectivas*, SP, SOTER/Paulinas/Loyola, 2003. En las pp 24-25, sitúa el nacimiento de la teología feminista latinoamericana en los años 80. Nos parece que los embriones más lejanos y básicos de dicha teología se sitúan más allá en el tiempo, en los años 70. Sin embargo, podríamos concordar con la autora si esa afirmación implicara que es solamente en los 80 que la teología hecha por mujeres en AL llega a un grado de sistematización que puede considerarse riguroso y académico, aunque permanezca inextricablemente militante.

² Cf. el libro de Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, es publicado en 1973

³ Cf sobre eso el trabajo de S. SUAIDEN, *Questões contemporâneas para a teologia – Provocações sob a ótica de gênero*, in SOTER (org) *Genero e Teologia. Interpelações e perspectivas*, SP, Soler/Paulinas/Loyola, 2003, p 147

⁴ Cf. feminización de la pobreza...

⁵ Encuentros – fechas Los temas de los encuentros - que se dieron a nivel nacional y latinoamericano - dan testimonio de esta progresividad de aglutinación y organización que fue haciendo de la comunidad teológica y pastoral femenina un sujeto activo adentro de la comunidad eclesial: "Mujer: aquella que aprendió a desconocer su lugar" (198...); "Mujer: en búsqueda de su identidad" (198...); "Y la mujer rompió el silencio" (198) ; "Haciendo teología en el femenino plural" (198) seguidos de otros que mantuvieron los puntos-clave de éstos primeros pasos: la ocupación de un lugar que no era suyo desde el inicio; el encuentro de una nueva identidad, dada por el Otro; la rotura del silencio y el acceso a la visibilidad y audibilidad del espacio eclesial y de la comunidad teológica; la solidaridad y la pluralidad cómplice en el saber y en el quehacer teológicos.

⁶ Cf. Ivone GEBARA, III Semana Teológica - Construyendo nuestras Teologías Feministas. In: *Tópicos 90 - Cuadernos de Estudios*, Chile, Ediciones Ruhue Ltda., sept. de 1993, pp. 71-124, citado por S. R. LIMA e SILVA, in <http://ejesus.com.br/lista/8/conteudo/6250/> acessado en 20/2/2008

⁷ Sería largo citar todas las publicaciones que se insertan en esa etapa. Se ocuparía demasiado espacio en ese artículo y se correría el serio riesgo de olvidar nombres y obras importantes. Remitimos, por lo tanto, a la tesis doctoral de M. PILAR AQUINO, *Nuestro clamor por la vida, Teología Latinoamericana desde la Perspectiva de la Mujer*, San José, Costa Rica: Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones, 1992 que recoge exhaustivamente ese trabajo y sus frutos. Remitimos igualmente a la labor extraordinaria que desde hace varios años viene realizando el programa Teologanda, de Argentina, (cf. www.teologanda.ar) y que recoge no solamente este período de la historia de la teología femenina en AL sino que busca hacer un mapeo más completo de la misma.

⁸ Cf. por ejemplo la publicación coordinada por M. BRANDÃO, *Teologia na ótica da mulher*, RJ,

⁹ Cf. por ejemplo los trabajos de.....

¹⁰ Identificamos entre esas influencias de teólogas europeas a nombres como Giulia Paola di Nicola, Georgette Blaquièrre, etc.

¹¹ Pensamos aquí por ejemplo em R. DARCY DE OLIVEIRA, con su importante libro *Elogio de la diferencia*, SP, 1991 y otras.

¹²

¹³ CF. M.C. de FREITAS, art. cit., p 25

¹⁴ Cf. S. R. de LIMA SILVA, Teología feminista latinoamericana, in <http://ejesus.com.br/lista/8/conteudo/6250/> acessado em 19/2/2008. Cf., igualmente el texto de I GEBARA, Entre os limites da filosofia e da teologia feminista, in SOTER (org.), *Genero e teologia. Interpelações e perspectivas*, op. cit., pp 153-170

¹⁵ Arriesgamos aquí esa interpretación dejando claro que es nuestra lectura de los hechos. No necesariamente implica un consenso amplio en toda la comunidad teológica sobre la marcha del proceso de la teología feminista.

¹⁶ Cf. lo que dice M. C. DE FREITAS, op. cit.,

¹⁷ I. GEBARA, Teología Cósmica: Ecofeminismo e Panenteísmo. In: *Folha Mulher, Projeto Sofia: Mulher, Teologia e Cidadania*, Rio de Janeiro, ISER, n. 8, Ano IV, 1994.

¹⁸ I. GEBARA, *Rompendo o silencio: uma fenomenologia feminista do mal*, Petrópolis, Vozes, 2000, p. 218

¹⁹ Cf los trabajos de M. IZILDA

²⁰ Cf. W. DEIFELT

²¹ *Ecofeminismo* é um termo originalmente "criado" por *Françoise d'Eaubonne* (mulher, francesa e feminista) em 1974 e simboliza a síntese de ambientalismo (ou mesmo ecologia) e feminismo, que mais tarde foi aplicado à raiz do Movimento Chipko na Índia e no Women's Pentagon Action nos Estados Unidos da América. É a teoria que busca o fim de todas as formas de opressão. Relaciona as conexões entre as dominações por raça, gênero, classe social, dominação da natureza, do outro - a mulher, a criança, o idoso, o índio. Identificam-se vários Ecofeminismos que acordam quanto fim dos "ismos" de dominação, sejam eles históricos, simbólicos, casuais, literários, políticos, religiosos, étnicos e buscam igualmente o resgate do Ser. Um convívio sem dominante e dominado, onde há complementação e nunca exploração.

²² Cf. sobretudo I. GEBARA, *Teologia Ecofeminista*, SP, Olho d'água, 1988.

²³ Cf. por ejemplo la revista *Mandrágora* n 6 (2000), toda ella sobre Ecofeminismo, con artículos, debates y entrevistas diversas. Eu Estados Unidos, v. las reflexiones de otras teólogas, como R.R. RUETHER.....que bastante influenciaron las teólogas feministas latinoamericanas.

²⁴ Cf. el libro de la Asamblea de la SOTER de 2004, *Corporeidade e Teologia.*, SP,. Paulinas, 2007, que se ocupa de esta dimensión de la teología. Merecen destaque ahí los trabajos de M. I. Millen, W. Deifelt, L. RIBEIRO, entre otras.

²⁵ Cf. MD

²⁶ Cf, las delegacias, etc.

²⁷ Católicas por el derecho a decidir, etc. M. J. ROSADO NUNES,

²⁸ Cf. M. I. MILLEN, M. Joaquina, N. FALCON etc. E também I. GEBARA.

²⁹ *Empowerment'* é uma abordagem de [projeto](#) de trabalho que objetiva a delegação de poder de decisão, autonomia e participação

³⁰ Cf

³¹ Cf. por ejemplo, la tesis de L. ETSUKO TOMITA, *Corpo e cotidiano: a experiência das mulheres de movimentos populares desafia a teologia feminista da libertação na América Latina*, defendida em junho de 2004. Y también los trabajos de W. DEIFELT, etc.

³² La reciente Carta Apostólica *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, promulgada en mayo de 1994, reafirma, por medio de la palabra del propio Papa João Paulo II, que la Iglesia no tiene autoridad para ordenar mujeres al sacerdocio. Afirma, además, que esta doctrina si braguero en la tradición continuada de la Iglesia. A 18 de noviembre de 1995, la Congregación para la doctrina de la fe publicó una respuesta a la cuestión suscitada en muchos medios eclesiais sobre si esa cuestión pertenecería al depósito de la fe. La respuesta de la comisión no da a la declaración del pontífice lo acuño de definición *ex cathedra*, pero afirma que es doctrina "fundada en la palabra escrita de Dios"y que fue "desde el comienzo continuamente preservada y colocada en práctica en la tradición de la Iglesia", allende ser "presentada infaliblemente por el Magisterio ordinario y universal".

³³ Cf. Conferencia Episcopal de Brasil: Aparecida.

³⁴ Cf. Documentos de Aparecida.

³⁵ Sobre eso cf. los trabajos de

³⁶ Cf. "teologia de textos y teologia de testigos"

Ms. Emilia Robles Bohórquez

EL PAPEL DE LOS LAICOS EN LA IGLESIA Y LA SOCIEDAD

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Laboral: Desde 73-81 soldadora en una fábrica del Metal, con responsabilidades sindicales. A partir de 1991 la experiencia laboral y voluntaria está relacionada con los ámbitos de Educación, comunicación interna y externa de organizaciones, formación de familias y profesorado, mejora de la comunicación y el trabajo en equipo, trabajo en red, mediación y resolución de conflictos, atención terapéutica y de orientación a personas y familias. **Compromiso**

eclesial: En la JOC, en parroquias, en comunidades de base; Dos trienios (1996-2002) en el servicio estatal de Mediación y Comunicación de la Corriente Somos Iglesia (España). De 2002-2012 en la Coordinación Internacional de la red Proconcil. Colaboración ocasional en algunas revistas religiosas (Vida Nueva, Reinado Social, Antena Misionera, Christus...)

Introducción

Muchas gracias, de corazón por esta invitación. Desde hace años conozco SEDOS y se algo del importante trabajo que aquí se realiza, pero nunca imaginé que iba a tener oportunidad de compartir con vosotros y vosotras un espacio de reflexión, debate y enriquecimiento mutuo como este.

Se me ha encomendado una intervención situada en uno de los tres grandes ejes que aquí se van a tratar: los laicos, las mujeres y los indígenas. Muy modestamente, al lado de M^a Clara Bingemer, que ya ha intervenido esta mañana, me voy a situar en el eje **de los laicos** (aunque evidentemente, no son compartimentos estancos, porque parte de los laicos son indígenas y una gran parte son mujeres, por lo que habrá reflexiones que se puedan extrapolar de unas ponencias a otras). Dado que tuve que entregar la ponencia hace tiempo para su traducción, pido excusas si repito parte de lo expuesto. Al mismo tiempo, se podría considerar como una llamada de atención especial sobre algunos aspectos.

Ni por mi propio perfil, ni por las características y metodología de la organización que coordino, que luego presentaré a grandes líneas, voy a tener ninguna pretensión de exhaustividad. Más bien, me imagino que, entre todos los que intervengamos vamos a ir dando pinceladas, a modo de un cuadro impresionista, con lo que iremos construyendo una visión más compartida sobre los temas que nos ocupan, para después seguir profundizando en diversas cuestiones, colectivamente, con el método elegido.

Primeras reflexiones generales

Los laicos en la Iglesia Católica Romana. Estamos hablando de un colectivo que representa el 98% de más de mil millones de persona bautizadas en el mundo en el seno de

esta Iglesia, según datos recogidos de una ponencia de Germán Carriquiri, subsecretario del Pontificio Consejo para los laicos.

¿Cuál es su situación en la Iglesia?

Hay una fuerte corriente histórica que presenta al laicado como un colectivo emergente desde la segunda mitad del siglo XIX. Esta corriente se afianza hoy, validada y reenfocada por el Concilio Vaticano II. Suscita y refuerza en nuestros días una autoconciencia renovada de la vocación, dignidad, identidad de los fieles laicos; de su pertenencia y corresponsabilidad en la comunión eclesial; y de su contribución a la Misión de la Iglesia. Y ahora, en concreto, en estos albores del siglo XXI, se dan retos y desafíos específicos que conciernen a este colectivo. Desafíos que afectan a toda la comunidad eclesial y repercuten en toda la Humanidad y, en particular en los más pobres, a los que intentaremos aportar nuestra visión.

Si comparamos la situación de los laicos hoy con la de otros sectores de Iglesia (sacerdotes, religiosos, jerarquía eclesiástica) lo primero que vemos es su mayor **diversidad o heterogeneidad interna**. Sin que sea lo único relevante, pero sí lo más visible, respecto a su práctica religiosa dominical, se apunta que solamente de un 5 a un 10% participan en la Eucaristía dominical. En diferentes encuestas realizadas a laicos, en distintos lugares del mundo, se observa también **su desconexión o su abierta disidencia** al respecto de muchas cuestiones disciplinares y morales de la Iglesia. Su **participación** como colectivo en asuntos que competen a toda la Iglesia no está canalizada globalmente (como puede estarlo la de religiosos y sacerdotes, para los que hay muchos más cauces establecidos). Y tampoco, con excepciones muy contadas, disfrutan de condiciones de **sostenibilidad** para desarrollar su misión evangelizadora y misionera, e impulsora de la renovación necesaria en la Iglesia. Esta sostenibilidad y falta de compartir los recursos de la Iglesia no sólo afecta a su compromiso eclesial, sino a los **cauces** para el cultivo de su espiritualidad vinculada a la vida y de su formación permanente. Al mismo tiempo, al no depender económicamente de la Iglesia, esto les dota de **mayor libertad**. Otro aspecto a tener en cuenta es la **distancia** que sigue existiendo entre clérigos y laicos, a pesar de los planteamientos conciliares; que se manifiesta- entre otras cuestiones- en el acceso a ministerios ordenados- agrandándose aún más la brecha entre hombres y mujeres. Otra cuestión que afecta a los laicos, en general, es el tema de la **inculturación**. La desproporción que se hace presente en una Iglesia institucional con un fuerte acento y poder específico europeo, romano y curial, repercute también en el sentido de identidad y de pertenencia de los laicos de otros continentes distintos al europeo. Y no sólo es difícil la inculturación en este sentido, sino en cuanto que la Iglesia va quedando más aislada del mundo de hoy y pierde credibilidad en sus mensajes, en sus lenguajes, en sus prácticas, esto afecta con una connotación específica al sector laical, porque **sus vínculos con la Iglesia institucional son más débiles; y, más fuertes, en cambio, con el mundo secular**, con sus gozos, sus esperanzas, sus problemas...de aquí que se debilite con más facilidad su **identidad y su pertenencia a la institución**. Tal vez también, **la agitación** de la vida hoy, que se opone a la contemplación, repercute de una manera más intensa en los laicos y **dificulta más su vida de oración**, pero no significa que esa inquietud espiritual no esté presente en muchos de ellos; y que sus esfuerzos no sean encomiables en búsquedas mejor o peor orientadas.

Estas cuestiones pueden ser bastante compartidas y **son lugares comunes**. Seguro que se pueden enriquecer en la reflexión posterior. A nosotros, desde la red que represento y de la que luego hablaré a grandes rasgos, **nos interesa también resaltar otros aspectos que no siempre son tan evidentes**. Para ello haremos uso de algunos enfoques específicos.

a) Desde la diferenciación.

Según quienes usen y en qué contexto lo hagan la palabra "laicos" se están refiriendo a diferentes sectores de este colectivo. Es importante ser conscientes de ello y **mostrar la diferenciación**. Por ejemplo, en España, si los medios de comunicación hablan de que "los laicos" se van a manifestar o van a convocar unas jornadas y lo hacen con el beneplácito de la Jerarquía Católica, quienes están más informados sobreentienden que se refieren a determinados grupos de laicos organizados. No están hablando de los Movimientos de Acción

Católica, ni de la mayoría de los laicos que permanecen en el anonimato o pertenecen a parroquias o a comunidades y que pueden agruparse en torno a un tema específico. De manera que algo que es totalmente legítimo, aunque parcial, se presenta como si agotara la realidad laical, que es mucho más compleja y está muy dispersa. Incluso, en la mayoría de los laicos, ni siquiera hay una conciencia de colectivo con capacidad de ejercer su corresponsabilidad; funcionan como un agregado y no como un sistema, por lo que se pierde el aspecto sinérgico de la eficacia de su acción eclesial.

Con el emerger de los movimientos y redes de reforma (Somos Iglesia, Call To Action, Corpus, la voz de los Creyentes y otros muchos) a mediados de los 90 se genera una conciencia interesante en muchos laicos, que va más allá incluso de las reformas que proponen y de las estrategias para lograrlas, que pueden ser más o menos compartidas. Es la conciencia de **ser y hacer Iglesia**, la conciencia de identidad, de participación y de corresponsabilidad. Hay quienes promueven asociaciones específicas de laicos, tratando de limitar el peso de la Jerarquía, que puede actuar con más fuerza sobre los sacerdotes y religiosos implicados en determinados movimientos o iniciativas limitando sus compromisos. Otro sector del laicado, aún teniendo conciencia de su importancia colectiva en el devenir de la Iglesia, practica poco el corporativismo y se sienten miembros corresponsables. Así observamos que en los movimientos especializados de Acción Católica, en las comunidades de base, en comunidades parroquiales, en lo que se han venido llamando los nuevos movimientos de iglesia, los laicos están ahí y son mayoría; pero no suelen incidir en una opción corporativa, excepto en situaciones específicas cuando tienen un conflicto que les enfrenta a otro sector (consiliarios, párrocos); y no necesariamente hacen extensivo el conflicto a todo el clero.

b) Desde la visibilidad y el poder

Esta visibilidad y este poder dentro de la institución de diferentes sectores laicales, están conectados a la relación que tengan con la Jerarquía de la Iglesia. Y aquí hay que matizar entre diferentes colectivos laicales y entre diferentes jerarquías. No todos los colectivos laicos tienen la misma visibilidad ni las mismas posibilidades de expresar su voz dentro de la Iglesia. No todos los colectivos laicales o con mayoría de laicos son valorados igual, ni se desea y estimula por igual su participación (y no necesariamente porque se “aparten” de la comunión eclesial sino porque le resultan incómodos “políticamente” hablando a alguna jerarquía con poder).

Desgraciadamente existen también colectivos laicales con una tendencia a la sectarización, por lo que son vistos por algunos sectores de Iglesia como una amenaza para la cohesión de la comunidad católica, sobre todo en la medida en que cobran peso y acaparan recursos de distinto tipo (económicos, mediáticos, jerárquicos....) Digamos que la parte positiva que se busca es ser fiel a un carisma o a una forma de entender el compromiso eclesial, pero los resultados son de reforzar su identidad a base de crear iglesias paralelas que no suman, sino restan. Se puede ver -aunque con tintes diferentes- tanto en grupos más conservadores, como en algunos progresistas. En dirección opuesta y con un signo también negativo está la tendencia a la centralización y a la indiferenciación. Y, en ocasiones, no se mide con el mismo rasero según a qué organizaciones.

Todos sabemos también la visibilidad y apoyo que tuvieron los llamados “nuevos movimientos” en el Pontificado de Juan Pablo II, frente a las dificultades de los antiguos movimientos o de las Comunidades de Base; y aún pasa según en qué contextos. De manera que podríamos decir que se van estableciendo en la Iglesia diferentes categorías de laicos, en orden a preocupaciones que, no por legítimas, son siempre justificables en su actuación.

Y, ya en los márgenes, queda la inmensa mayoría de los laicos que no están organizados, ni participan activamente en la forma esperada, pero que sí se ven afectados por los rumbos que la Iglesia toma: se ven concernidos en su fe, en los juicios y orientaciones morales, en su inclusión o no en la comunión eclesial, en la visión que los demás tienen de ellos como parte de la Iglesia y que ellos mismo tienen de la Iglesia. Pero faltan cauces y metodologías adecuadas para que puedan formarse, reflexionar y expresarse en aquello que les afecta.

c) Desde la perspectiva histórica

Esta perspectiva nos importa, porque la Historia, revisada críticamente, es maestra. La palabra *laikós* en la acepción actual, que diferencia a los que tienen un ministerio en la comunidad de los que no lo tienen no aparece hasta finales del siglo I. **No está en el Nuevo Testamento.** En cambio, si aparece en el nuevo Testamento, la palabra *laos*, en el sentido de pueblo, considerando a toda la comunidad, ministros y no ministros, como pueblo, sacerdocio real, nación consagrada. Esto no significa que no haya ya en esta primera época una organización interna ni diferenciación entre funciones. Pero no es hasta principios del tercer siglo cristiano cuando aparece la palabra clero, para designar al grupo de los ministros de la comunidad. Aún en este tiempo, queda muy claro que **la tarea de evangelización es cosa de todos, que los consejos evangélicos son para todos; y abundan profetas y evangelizadores laicos. También hay teólogos y apologetas laicos; y los ministerios, que florecen también en las comunidades, no son sólo de varones, sino también femeninos.** Con Constantino se multiplican los signos externos de separación entre un clero que se hace orden, o categoría social y el pueblo. En la Edad Media se acentúa la devaluación del laicado unida a la devaluación del Matrimonio, concesión a la debilidad humana, comparado con el celibato. La separación entre clero y pueblo se institucionaliza en el Derecho. El laicado queda excluido del ámbito de lo sagrado y se refugia en una espiritualidad devocional, separada de la liturgia. Para lograr la santidad hay que acercarse lo más posible a la vida monacal. En la época de las Reformas, Lutero impulsará el acortamiento de distancias dentro de la Iglesia entre clérigos y laicos. Trento, en respuesta, reafirmará la naturaleza jerárquica de la Iglesia insistiendo en las diferencias, aunque también reafirma la unidad por el sacerdocio bautismal de todos los creyentes. Pero ya años antes de Lutero el laicado católico estaba empezando a iniciar un reforma desde abajo que Trento tratará de aplicar en sus decretos conciliares. Durante el siglo XIX hay un fuerte emerger del laicado, con el nacimiento de la Acción Católica en Bélgica, que incluso promovida por Pío XI, no logrará romper la imagen clerical de la Iglesia. En el siglo XX la Acción Católica tiene un papel protagonista en la revitalización de la conciencia laical y a rebajar la distancia clérigos-laicos. Estas reflexiones y este reequilibrio van conduciendo hasta el Vaticano II. En la *Lumen Gentium*, la Iglesia, entrando en el propio misterio que brota del corazón de la Trinidad se descubre como Pueblo de Dios, donde todos los bautizados, independientemente de su tarea o ministerio dentro de este pueblo, participan de las riquezas y responsabilidades que comporta la identidad cristiana. Lo mismo se aprecia en la *Gaudium et Spes*. Con esto se tiende a superar la clásica división sacerdotes-religiosos-laicos, con el binomio de raíz neotestamentaria, comunidad (radical unidad) ministerios (diversidad).

LA PERSPECTIVA DE PROCONCIL

Desde qué lugar hablamos y cuál es nuestro compromiso:

El origen de Proconcil:

Proconcil es hoy una red mundial, que agrupa a varios miles de personas y en la que se trabaja fundamentalmente a través de una red virtual de comunicación, debate y dinámica de participación. Las personas que co-impulsamos y que hoy coordinamos esta iniciativa vivimos de cerca y estuvimos implicados en el emerger de los grupos y redes de reforma que reforzaban y practicaban esa conciencia de ser y hacer Iglesia. De hecho, en España, Proconcil se presenta en el marco de un encuentro celebrado en Septiembre de 2002, en la Universidad Carlos III, de Madrid, bajo el lema: "Otra Iglesia es posible", coordinado por la Corriente Somos Iglesia, con la participación de 500 delegados de 30 países y de cuatro continentes, la gran mayoría, laicos, aunque con presencia significativa de presbíteros, religiosos y religiosas, e incluso e un obispo brasileño, D. Tomás Balduino, como signo visible de comunión.

Lo que nos conduce a esta propuesta, que explicaré más detalladamente, es la constancia de las enormes brechas que se van abriendo en la Iglesia y la dificultad de colaboración y de búsqueda de consensos entre diferentes sectores y sensibilidades eclesiales. Un grupo de personas, de diferentes sectores de Iglesia, a través de nuestra implicación en la marcha de la Iglesia, llegamos, en verano de 2001 a compartir una preocupación: hay una

situación general que dificulta la convergencia de visión, de objetivos compartidos y de sumar esfuerzos para que la Iglesia sea más fiel y más eficiente en el cumplimiento de su Misión. Y achacamos ese déficit a la falta de mediaciones que hagan posible ese camino. Es cierto que existen conflictos en la Iglesia de diferente gravedad y que afectan a relaciones y estructuras y que exigen cambios y renovación, pero se necesita, además, crecer en una visión compartida.

Desde los tiempos de los Apóstoles han surgido conflictos en la Iglesia. El conflicto es connatural a cualquier sociedad y puede ser fuente de oportunidades. También existe una manera cristiana de abordarlos, inserta en la Gran Tradición. En las Iglesias cristianas la *conciliaridad* es una cualidad que se inspira en la teología trinitaria y en el mandato de Cristo de caminar hacia la unidad. Esta reflexión y práctica conciliar son imprescindibles, si queremos que la Iglesia sea fiel y eficaz en la Misión que le ha sido encomendada: la construcción del Reino, con una atención especial a los pobres y excluidos. Hacia ahí tienen que converger nuestros esfuerzos, incluyendo el debate respetuoso que contempla un sano pluralismo.

Proconcil nace en la primavera del año 2002, impulsando a nivel internacional una campaña a favor de un proceso conciliar. La acción consistió en difundir una carta pública, dirigida al Papa, que fue inicialmente firmada por cuarenta obispos católicos y que después sería respaldada por cerca de 8000 firmas, entre ellas las de muchos presbíteros, religiosos y mayoritariamente laicos comprometidos, principalmente de España y América. En la carta se pedía –en síntesis– caminar hacia un nuevo Concilio en forma de proceso conciliar, participativo y corresponsable, en continuidad con el Vaticano II; en diálogo con las otras Iglesias cristianas, con otras religiones y con la sociedad para responder mejor a los retos que hoy tiene planteados la Iglesia y que afectan a la Humanidad y en particular a los pobres.

Unos meses después de ser presentada la iniciativa en el encuentro internacional celebrado en España fue presentada en un contexto latinoamericano, en el año 2003, en el contexto de la Conferencia “El cristianismo en América Latina y el Caribe”, celebrado en Sao Paulo con la presencia de 700 delegados.

La iniciativa de Proconcil encuentra un terreno abonado históricamente, desde el Vaticano II (Decreto *Christus Dominus*). Teólogos, (ya en el encuentro del 77 en Notre Dame de la revista *Concilium*), obispos (Helder Camara, Quinn), cardenales (Martini, Lehman, Hamao), la CLAR, El Consejo Mundial de Iglesia; y grupos de “reforma”, con muchos laicos apoyando e impulsando, han planteado, de una forma o de otra, la necesidad de continuar la tradición conciliar; de retomar cuestiones del Vaticano II que hoy siguen siendo brújula y de abordar otras nuevas; y, en esta línea, nuestro modesto trabajo, significa un paso más en la dirección de preparar el camino hacia un nuevo concilio; unido a esto, hay que destacar que la propuesta de Proconcil tiene algunas características nuevas:

- 1.- Proconcil plantea más que un concilio, un “proceso conciliar”, desde las iglesias particulares y continentales, a lo largo de un periodo amplio para facilitar una amplia participación de las comunidades católicas.
- 2.- El proceso conciliar incluye la posibilidad de que se puedan realizar uno o varios concilios canónicos, tanto particulares como generales, pero lo importante es promover la *conciliaridad eclesial* a través de múltiples medios.
3. Mientras que algunas iniciativas conciliares promueven un concilio al estilo tradicional, con participación sobre todo de obispos; y mientras algunos grupos de reforma promueven un concilio de laicos, desde Proconcil se promueve la práctica de la conciliaridad, utilizando cauces que ya existan (conferencias de obispos, foros de curas, conferencias de religiosos, grupos laicales) y otros nuevos que se puedan crear y que amplíen la participación, favoreciendo la colaboración, la comunicación y la permeabilidad, incidiendo en el binomio postconciliar y neotestamentario comunidad-ministerios, antes que en la división clero-religiosos-laicos.
- 3.- El proceso conciliar debe poner el acento en los graves retos que atraviesa la humanidad y que afectan, principalmente a los pobres; las reformas eclesiales están relacionadas con la necesidad de fortalecer a la Iglesia para cumplir mejor su misión en el mundo de hoy y en los años venideros.

4.- El proceso conciliar debe estar abierto al diálogo y a la colaboración con otras iglesias cristianas, con otras religiones y distintos sectores de la sociedad.

5.- El proceso conciliar es también un método para ir creando las condiciones que son necesarias para impulsar la misión evangelizadora de la Iglesia y realizar reformas en su seno, con la amplia y profunda participación de las comunidades, con consenso y con estabilidad.

La realización adecuada y pacífica de este proceso irá colocando a la Iglesia en mejores condiciones para encarar una gran Misión de evangelización, afrontando los graves retos que la Humanidad tiene por delante que ponen en riesgo su viabilidad misma sobre la Tierra, afectando principalmente a la población más vulnerable. La mediación eclesial es la práctica de tender puentes de comunicación y diálogo entre sectores de la Iglesia; de generar un clima de corresponsabilidad, respeto y confianza entre distintas sensibilidades, **“deshaciendo nudos para rehacer lazos”**. La falta de mediaciones dificulta que el proceso conciliar avance y que la Iglesia se renueve para responder mejor a los nuevos retos. Para dar sostenibilidad a esta tarea Proconcil, desde el año 2006, es una fundación civil de inspiración cristiano-católica.

Cómo situamos la cuestión del laicado dentro de los objetivos propuestos.

Superando la pasividad de los laicos como consumidores de servicios; tomando distancia del enfoque más corporativo que segrega laicos de religiosos y sacerdotes. Desde Proconcil ponemos el énfasis en lo común que nos une, que es nuestra condición de bautizados, de **Christifidelis**. Esto no significa que no pueda haber tareas y ministerios diferenciados, así como opciones de vida que llevan consigo modalidades de vivir la fe y de relacionarse con la comunidad. Pero, en la tarea conciliar hemos de converger y cooperar todos. Y cuanto más podamos compartir visión, mejor será esta colaboración y este acertar en atender una Gran misión: el compromiso desde Cristo por la Paz la Justicia y la Vida con Dignidad para todos y todas. De acuerdo con esto hay que incidir en la ciudadanía plena de los laicos como bautizados como capacidad de reflexionar, aportar desde su especificidad a la estructura de la Iglesia y ser escuchada.

Todo esto requiere un trabajo específico, dirigido al laicado, que tendrá que ver con el método de educación en la fe desde distintos ámbitos; en el acompañamiento y formación permanente de los laicos, en el incidir en que todos los bautizados somos testigos y misioneros de Jesucristo; en ahondar en la conciencia de que somos Iglesia; en la mejora de una comunión eclesial dinámica, creativa y caritativa. Nada puede quedar ajeno a esa conversión, a esa transformación de toda la existencia “El que está en Cristo, es nueva creación” (II Cor.5, 16). Otro de los aspectos importantes a cuidar es la dimensión de la vida en comunidad, que acompaña y potencia un sentido de pertenencia eclesial; y, cómo no, la posibilidad de vivir la eucaristía y de celebrar la Eucaristía.

Al mismo tiempo, para que esta tarea se pueda realizar de una forma adecuada, tendremos que estar atentos con mirada crítica y propositiva a aquellas situaciones, algunas de ellas ya enunciadas al principio de esta conferencia, que segregan, marginan o bien clericalizan a los laicos, (o segregan a los laicos indígenas, o a las laicas en general, pues también hay que estar atentos a marginaciones particulares); y también de aquellas – con raíces tanto en la sociedad cuanto en la Iglesia- que favorecen el divorcio entre la vida cotidiana y la vivencia evangélica; de las que impiden o dificultan a los laicos participar de la Eucaristía dominical, en donde se hace Iglesia y dónde se hace a la Iglesia; de aquellas que recortan su participación en la vida de la Iglesia, o que les dejan a su suerte, o les ponen piedras en el camino cuando se comprometen en tareas por la Justicia, la Paz y la Vida, de una forma preferencial con los más pobres.

A partir de nuestro trabajo participativo vemos que hay tareas más compartidas como elementos a potenciar y otras sobre las que hay que seguir reflexionando:

Algunas de estas cuestiones en las que profundizar son:

Situar el acontecimiento de Cristo en nuestras vidas por encima de las tareas o ministerios.

Anteponer la palabra bautizados y ser menos reduccionistas, pues la mayor parte de las tareas son comunes, aunque se puedan realizar desde diferentes ambientes y con diferentes carismas. Incluso replantearse la ampliación de ministerios laicales.

Generar un mayor reconocimiento del Matrimonio como sacramento, sin generar comparaciones de más y menos, con respecto a otra opción de vida como el celibato.

Crear y sostener comunidades diversas vivas y maduras donde se potencien los dones y carismas de todos los bautizados.

Ampliar la conciencia de que todos y todas los bautizados/as somos enviados, a evangelizar.

Reducir la dicotomía entre sagrado y profano. Esto tiene que conciliarse con el concepto de laicidad en la política y en las instituciones.

Avanzar en las estructuras internas de la Iglesia, de modo que las leyes internas garanticen y se abran a nuevas estructuras que promuevan este espíritu de conciliaridad corresponsable e integradora entre distintos sectores de Iglesia.

Favorecer la libertad, el diálogo y el contraste en la búsqueda teológica, pues aunque no sea misión de los teólogos hacer doctrina, si lo es investigar y estudiar con libertad, para poder ayudar en la apertura de caminos más acordes al espíritu del Evangelio y más fieles a la Misión de la Iglesia.

Conjugar la pertenencia a la Iglesia Católica Romana, con el descubrimiento- que muchos pueden estar haciendo- de que nos encontramos en un tiempo de síntesis interreligiosa; o macroecumenismo que llaman otros; al tiempo, saber que esta síntesis hay que poder hacerla desde una identidad bien construida y diferenciando los signos de identidad y de pertenencia a la comunidad católica con otros signos de identidad y de pertenencia más amplios, que se pueden complementar y enriquecer mutuamente.

Hay quien ve unos campos muy determinados para que los laicos actúen: la familia, la política, el trabajo, la cultura, la educación...; Otros no los ven tan diferenciados, salvo, tal vez en pequeños matices; ni sienten que esto sea un signo de identidad, sino que estiman que esas presencia podrían ser compartidas: hay religiosos artistas, los hay en ámbitos de comunicación de masas, hay numerosos sacerdotes y religiosos en algún tipo de compromiso socio-político, existe la rica aunque pequeña realidad de los curas obreros, e incluso si hubiera variaciones sobre la ley del celibato, algunos presbíteros tendrían un compromiso familiar. De manera que ese puede ser, a nuestro modesto entender, uno de los puntos menos claros; y lo que si estaría claro es que cada cual debe buscar compatibilizar estas presencias y actuaciones con su condición de bautizados y con sus funciones y ministerios específicos y su servicio a la comunidad; o con sus opciones de cómo vivir los consejos evangélicos.

Algunas preguntas que nos llegan:

También, frente a las enseñanzas del Vaticano II muchos se preguntan:

- Si hacer una teología propia del laicado o hacer una teología de la Iglesia que de razón de la unidad y la diversidad como factores necesarios de la comunión, que ya se apunta fuertemente en el Vaticano II?
- ¿Cuál sería la función específica del laicado en la vida y misión de la Iglesia ¿Podemos contentarnos con decir que el mundo, lo secular es lo específico y peculiar de los laicos? ¿Es que el resto del pueblo de Dios no tiene nada que hacer ante los graves retos que afectan a la Humanidad aquí abajo? (De ahí podrían desprenderse palabras como las que cierto político hace meses le decía al obispo de Aysen en Chile, ante un grave conflicto de la comunidad, que "el obispo se dedique a rezar". ¿Solo tiene que rezar el obispo? ¿Cuántas maneras hay de rezar; y qué implican de compromiso con la realidad?

- La laicidad como reconocimiento del valor de las culturas, de la historia y del mundo ¿no sería en realidad una característica de toda la Iglesia y no sólo de un grupo de bautizados?

Un ejemplo de cómo trabajamos desde Proconcil aplicado a un proyecto que puede favorecer esta conciencia y actuación misionera del laicado.

Durante todo el año pasado se ha estado trabajando sobre **un proyecto concreto** (y aún seguimos en ello) **que toca de cerca la formación de comunidades vivas y el fortalecimiento del compromiso y del reconocimiento de los laicos**. Voy a resumirlo brevemente; y, si alguien tiene interés, podemos conversar en cualquier momento sobre ello.

Dos formas de presbíteros que coexisten y colaboran. La propuesta de Lobinger

Ante lo que se viene llamando “falta de vocaciones” designando con ello siempre a sacerdotes y religiosos; y ante la gran cantidad de comunidades –muchas veces rurales- que están viviendo con dificultades la celebración de la Eucaristía, el obispo emérito de Aliwal Sudafrica, de origen alemán, Fritz Lobinger propone la creación de un nuevo ministerio presbiteral que emerja de las propias comunidades, inspirándose en la tradición paulina. Un ministerio que revitalice los dones y carismas de los miembros de la comunidad; que coexista con el actual ministerio presbiteral, mejorado en su formación, diferenciación y tareas. Para Lobinger, las comunidades cristianas actuales están instaladas en una cierta pasividad, fruto, en parte, de la concepción del cura como “proveedor de servicios”. En este sentido, las comunidades olvidan que todos hemos sido enviados a la evangelización y que esta incluye como centro la vida eucarística. La propuesta parte de la experiencia constatada en muchas diócesis del hemisferio Sur de que los laicos y laicas son capaces de desarrollar ministerios. Si esta propuesta se desarrollara emergería la figura del laico ordenado como presbítero, siempre en equipo, en el marco de una comunidad cristiana madura. Estos equipos de presbíteros trabajarían en colaboración con los actuales sacerdotes, renovando la Iglesia la formación y espiritualidad de los mismos. Si ya en los primeros comienzos de la Iglesia se percibía la efusión de los dones y carismas del Espíritu, que tomaban forma en diversos ministerios ordenados en las comunidades, retomemos esa experiencia -sugiere Lobinger- de un ministerio presbiteral que emerge de las propias comunidades, adaptándola a nuestros contextos eclesiales y sociales. Esta propuesta, que empieza a ser considerada ampliamente, no pretende tener un alcance inmediatamente universal, sino que ofrece ir desde procesos locales, -consensuados, que mantengan la cohesión eclesial- a una propuesta más global. El centro de esta propuesta es el servicio a la Eucaristía y la maduración de las propias comunidades.

Algunos ejes convergentes que hemos encontrado en la propuesta de Lobinger en relación con los objetivos y metodología de Proconcil:

Hoy ya resulta ineludible e inaplazable entrar de lleno en el estudio y en el debate sobre nuevas formas de ministerialidad presbiteral, complementarias con las existentes. Algunos ya lo vienen haciendo desde hace tiempo. Pero hace falta que esta tarea se abra en profundidad y extensión al interior de la Iglesia. Y que todos y todas participemos en ella.

El foco de la propuesta no es la falta de curas, sino la dificultad para la celebración de la Eucaristía, la pasividad de muchas comunidades y la ausencia de reconocimientos de dones y carismas en el interior de las mismas. El objetivo del proyecto es deshacernos poco a poco del clericalismo y reaprender caminos de una Iglesia más participativa, en la que los laicos y laicas sean reconocidos como iguales. Una apertura en este sentido puede contribuir, además, a reforzar la cohesión interna de la Iglesia, a su acercamiento y diálogo con otras Iglesias cristianas, y a una mejora de su capacidad para llevar a cabo su misión evangelizadora, revitalizando las comunidades y fortaleciendo la vida eucarística. Pensamos que iniciativas de este tipo forman parte de un proceso conciliar en marcha, que se alimenta, como decía antes, no sólo de un concilio canónico o de sínodos, sino de cada iniciativa y cada espacio que aporta

ideas y compromiso para el cambio eclesial, siempre que se realice de forma integradora, dialogal y constructiva.

Para Proconcil, tan importante es que la Iglesia evolucione en un sentido de apertura, como que preserve su capacidad para gestionar sus cambios con estabilidad interna. El compromiso con la gobernabilidad de la Iglesia (en una perspectiva de servicio, no de dominación) es fundamental para que las reformas necesarias puedan llevarse a cabo. Y esta búsqueda de equilibrios y este compromiso con reforzar los vínculos y la cohesión al interior de la Iglesia están también presentes en la propuesta de Lobinger. (Con todo, no entendemos que esta sea “la” propuesta “definitiva” y “acabada”, sino un buen anteproyecto sobre el que se puede empezar a trabajar y a construir. Desde él no se hace un debate ideológico y tampoco se proporcionan todas las respuestas. Se pregunta a las comunidades qué están viviendo, a qué problemas y necesidades se enfrenta la comunidad en relación a distintas cuestiones: la relación con los curas, la corresponsabilidad comunitaria, etc. Los sujetos participantes actúan como protagonistas y deben valorar esas relaciones y situaciones. Se les estimula a ser creativos y proactivos, no basta con quejarse, se trata de sugerir entre todos vías de mejora para la situación en la comunidad. Al mismo tiempo, se les sugiere que se anticipen, que piensen en posibles reacciones favorables y adversas que pueden surgir, tanto si se implementan cambios como si se dejan las cosas como están. Es decir, se enseña de manera práctica a las personas/ miembros de la comunidad a imaginar escenarios de futuro. En un sistema complejo, como es la Iglesia, hay un grado importante de impredecibilidad. No podemos asegurar, a priori, cuáles van a ser todas las consecuencias de los cambios. Pero el hecho de que muchas personas reflexionen, sintiéndose parte activa de la Iglesia, sobre las posibles consecuencias de ciertas modificaciones, y también sobre las consecuencias de no hacer nada, de permanecer pasivos y de dejar las cosas como están, (además de enriquecer sus capacidades a nivel personal), es un valor añadido a la evolución del grupo, a su sentirse Iglesia y al desarrollo de su capacidad de prever y resolver conflictos.

Nuestra modesta contribución ha sido la de promover la traducción de los libros, su publicación en castellano, facilitar su distribución en América Latina y sobre todo, promover el debate y la reflexión compartida -en varias direcciones- en torno a este tema, desde una perspectiva conciliar en el sentido que hemos descrito a grandes rasgos en esta exposición.

Es evidente que para poder desarrollar iniciativas como ésta y otras en la misma línea conciliar tiene que crecer en toda la Iglesia la conciencia activa y comprometida de que los laicos y laicas somos bautizados, miembros de pleno derecho, que debemos poder formarnos, poder aportar, reflexionar y decidir en equiparación a otros sectores. Tienen que aumentarse los cauces eclesiales de participación y toma de decisiones y deben mejorar las estructuras de Iglesia para que esto, poco a poco, se vaya haciendo realidad. Este foro, sin duda, es una muestra de que se va haciendo camino.

Dr. Nicanor Sarmiento Tupayupanqui, OMI.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN SOCIETY AND THE CHURCH

Nicanor Sarmiento Tupayupanqui, OMI, is a Quechua from Peru. He earned a Ph. D. in Interdisciplinary Studies in Missiology and Cultural Anthropology from the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, with a dissertation entitled "Andean Christian Theologies, Elements of a Rainbow of Theological Voices of the Indigenous Peoples of Abya Yala: A Missiological and Anthropological Study of the Andean Trilogy". His research focuses on the dialogue between faith and cultures called inculturation or contextualization. He is the author of *Caminos de la Teología India* (UCB, Editorial Guadalupe and Verbo Divino, 2000), and of numerous articles on indigenous related issues, missiology, and contextual theologies. He is actively involved in the development of native theologies and spiritualities in Latin America, and has served as a missionary to the Innu people of Labrador, Canada, from 2000-2006. At present, he is a visiting faculty member at the Latin American Institute of Missiology of the Catholic University of Bolivia in Cochabamba.



Introduction:

The emergence of the Indigenous Peoples within the Christian churches and national societies of Latin America has been influenced and guided by the social, pastoral, ecclesial, theological, and missiological renewal brought about by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).¹ The Council challenged the entire Church to deal with internal and external issues and concerns. *Ad intra*, it was a moment of self-understanding of the Church in the light of the Scriptures, the writings of the Early Fathers, and the current theological movements. *Ad extra*, it was a moment to update the Teaching of the Church in the light of the scientific and technological advances of modernity; a moment to strengthen dialogue with other Christians, other religions, non-believers, and all people of good will to foster a just world. In the local Churches of Latin America, the teaching of the Council and other Papal Documents have been welcomed and contextualized in the five General Conferences of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops' Council (CELAM): Rio de Janeiro (1955), Medellín (1968), Puebla (1979), Santo Domingo (1992), and Aparecida (2007).² These Conferences have developed a rich and unique Latin American Magisterium in response to the multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-religious nature of the region, in which the descendants of the Indigenous Peoples, Mestizos, Africans, Europeans, and Asians live together.³

Latin American societies are witnessing the emergence of new historical subjects and ecclesial actors, as one of the signs of the times.⁴ Among these historically marginalized and silenced subjects are the Indigenous Peoples, African Americans, women, and the laity. In this Seminar, I was asked to speak about the emergence of the Indigenous Peoples in the Church and society, so I have organized my presentation in three sections. First, I will trace the emergence of the Indigenous Peoples as historical subjects and social actors in the local, national, and international circles. Second, I will explore the emergence of the local Churches in the Andes through the implementation of an inculturated evangelization of the Indigenous communities of the region. Finally, I will present the relevant points of the emergence of the Andean Christian Theologies in Bolivia and Peru.

1. The Emergence of the Indigenous Peoples as Historical Subjects and Social Actors

According to studies conducted by the United Nations, there are “more than 370 million” Indigenous Peoples living “in some 90 countries” of the world.⁵ They represent “less than 6 per cent” of the 6.1 billion inhabitants of the world. They belong to more than 6,000 indigenous cultures of the world, “they speak an overwhelming majority of the world’s estimated 7,000 languages, and are the stewards of some of the most biologically diverse areas, and they have accumulated an immeasurable amount of traditional knowledge about their ecosystems”.⁶ In America, from northern Alaska to southern Chile there are more than 800 indigenous cultures. The estimated population of Latin America and the Caribbean for 2010 was approximately 570 million inhabitants⁷ and estimates of the indigenous population of Latin America and the Caribbean fluctuate from 43 to 55 million.⁸ They represent 10 per cent of the Latin American and Caribbean population; 90 per cent of the Indigenous Peoples live in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru.⁹ According to the statistical information presented above the Indigenous Peoples are “the minority among the minorities” compared to the regional and world population, but they represent one of the most active emerging political, cultural, social, and religious groups in Latin America and the world.

In Latin America, the first popular movements began to gain some social and political prominence and voice in the 1940s. In the 1950s, the Agrarian and Educational Reform movements organized the Indigenous Peoples and the peasant communities into cooperatives of production and unions. For example, the Agrarian Reform in Bolivia (1952) converted the indigenous communities (*ayllus*) into unions (*sindicatos*).¹⁰ With the implementation of the Agrarian Reform in Peru (1969) “the *haciendas* became Agrarian Cooperatives of Production, others Associations of Production, Peasant Groups, and Peasant Communities” but these “official policies have not recognized the social and cultural characteristics of autonomy of the [indigenous] communities”.¹¹ According to Antonio Aparecido da Silva, since the 1960s, the Indigenous and the African American organizations have been striving for “recognition at the civil and ecclesial levels”, to become “the new cultural subjects” and “the new political actors”.¹²

In the following decades, the Indigenous Peoples organized numerous local, national, regional, and international indigenous movements with the help of the Christian churches, social scientists, and international advocacy networks. These grassroots organizations became the platform to voice the Indigenous Peoples’ different claims and struggles, ranging from cultural revival to political participation.¹³ According to Salvador Martí, Roberta Rice, and Donna Lee van Cott, one of the most significant and unexpected developments in Latin America during the last two decades is the emergence of political parties organized around Indigenous identity.¹⁴ Martí has named some of the relevant political movements, such as: the Zapatista Movement in Mexico, the actors of the Peace Accords in Guatemala in 1996, the Confederation of Pan-Andean Indigenous Organizations in Ecuador, the Pachakutik Indigenous Movement, and the Movement to Socialism in Bolivia, the current governing party of the country. Martí attributes the appearance of Indigenous political parties to the fact that the traditional parties’ agenda no longer answered the demands of the diverse sectors of society; nor to the changes in the structure of political opportunities in response to globalization, whereby policy-making is now no longer controlled by the Government but is increasingly the result of the interaction of a wide variety of social actors.¹⁵

For example, Evo Morales Ayma, the Aymara leader of the Movement to Socialism, was elected President of Bolivia, with 53.7 per cent of the votes, at the General Elections held on 18 December 2005.¹⁶ Morales chose Tiahuanaco, the sacred place of his ancestors, for the inauguration of his Government. This historic event intentionally included Andean rituals and ceremonies, promoting the visible inclusion of Indigenous customs and traditions in public events. In order to implement Indigenous rights and values from within the government structures, Morales faced up to the challenge of entirely revising the Constitution of Bolivia in 2006. After long legal procedures, he signed the new Constitution of Bolivia on 7 February 2009. Morales’ Government, in its first four year term, has faced and resolved many social, economic, political, and regional issues affecting Bolivia. Furthermore, on 9 December 2009,

Morales was reelected President with a historic 64.22 per cent majority vote for another four year term; his Government is relatively stable in a country marked by frequent political unrest.¹⁷ Morales' Government has clearly indicated the political maturity of the Indigenous leaders in Latin America. His Government is not the best in the region but it has shown the world the capability of the Indigenous movements in the political arena.

At the Fifth General Conference in Aparecida, Brazil, the Latin American Bishops pointed out some of the positive and negative aspects of the socio-political changes implemented in the region. They welcomed and supported the democratic electoral process in the election of municipal, regional, and national leaders, but they observed a growing authoritarian attitude in some of the democratically elected leaders.

Participatory democracy is gaining strength with the more assertive presence of civil society, and the emergence of new social actors, such as the Indigenous People, Afro-Americans, women, professionals, a broad middle-class, and organized poor people. While more room for political participation is being created, these groups are becoming aware of the power they hold in their hands and of the possibility of bringing about major changes in order to achieve more just Government policies, which will reverse their situation of exclusion.¹⁸

The Bishops advocate a participatory democracy, which respects Human Rights, promotes social justice, access to health services, education, food security, social security, access to land and housing, effective improvement of the economy to create jobs and legislation encouraging community support organizations (AD, nn. 74, 76). They have lamented the intensification of corruption at different levels of society and the State; involving the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the Government; creating mistrust in large sectors of the population, especially among the young people (AD, n. 77). Finally, the Bishops welcome the desire for regional integration through multilateral agreements, involving a growing number of countries, that establish their own regulations in the fields of trade, services, and patents. Similarly positive is the globalization of justice in the field of Human Rights and of crimes against humanity, which will gradually enable all to live under equal norms, intended to protect their dignity, integrity, and life (AD, n. 82). These observations indicate that Church leaders are accompanying the struggle for the legitimate rights of the Indigenous Peoples and other minority groups in Latin America (AD, n. 89).

2. The Emergence of Inculturated Local Churches in Abya Yala

Domingo Llanque Chana, an Aymara theologian from Peru, divides the history of the Church in the Andes into four overlapping phases: the Church of Christendom (1532-1950), the Church of the new Christendom (1950-1970), the renewed Church (1965-1974), and the missionary local and universal Church (1974-1992). In this study, I will add one more phase to Llanque's division, the systematization of Andean Theologies (1990-present). In the following paragraphs I will briefly explain the historical and theological importance of each of these phases.

The Church of Christendom is "the Church that arrived in the Andean world in 1532 with Friar Vicente Valverde, OP, during the Conquest, and lasted through the colonial and republican eras".¹⁹ This Church worked under the *Patronato* Pope Alexander VI had granted to the Catholic Monarchs of Spain and Portugal. The mandate of the Church was to establish ecclesiastical structures in the Andean Region. These structures included Indian missions, parishes, dioceses and archdioceses, etc. The Church was seen as "the only fortress of salvation" and "the pillar and the ground of truth"²⁰ which was supported by the teaching of the Council of Trent (1545-1563): "outside the Church there is no salvation".²¹ The Church was identified with the institutional body, the clergy. The lay people were merely members, passive subjects to the doctrine and partakers of the sacraments.

The Church of the New Christendom began with the arrival of a new group of North American and European missionaries, sent at the request of the Andean Bishops' Conferences and inspired by Pius XII's Encyclical Letter *Fidei Donum* (1957).²² In this Letter, the Pope

aimed to inspire all Catholics with apostolic zeal toward the regions of Europe where the Christian religion had been cast off, to assist the local Churches of South America, Oceania, Asia, and Africa with missionary and financial support (nn. 5, 7-9).

The main task of the missionary action was to “re-establish” the Catholic Church and “re-ignite the faith”²³ of the Indigenous People of the Andes. In the process the missionaries discovered that the Quechuas and Aymaras were profoundly Christian people but poor and abandoned. This sociological observation led them to establish: outreach ministry, educational programmes, and formation for local lay leaders conscious of their Christian faith and their socio-historical reality. The “Body of Christ”²⁴ was the favourite image of the Church; thus, we are all members of the Body of Christ but fulfill different functions. Based on this teaching, the laity was called to assist the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the pastoral ministry as translators, guides, catechists, and food and housing providers. The missionaries, in their effort to bring the Word of God to the “ignorant Indians” with “pagan customs”, discovered a profoundly Christian people with rich cultural values, traditions, and forms of spirituality.

The Renewed Church was marked by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the Medellín Conference (1968). The Church’s main action during this phase was to overcome the “Christendom” mentality and attitude, embedded for centuries in the pastoral approach of the missionaries and the faithful. The Bible study implemented by the *Fidei Donum* missionaries in the Aymara and Quechua communities eventually led to the creation of Base Ecclesial Communities. Llanque states: “It was relatively easy to organize Base Ecclesial Communities among the people who had a long communal experience as in the case of the people of the Andes”.²⁵ The Andean ministry towards an inculturated ministry was strengthened by the Second Vatican Council’s rich theological images: the Church is the People of God, the sacrament of salvation, the Church institution, and the eschatological community.²⁶

The Missionary Local and Universal Church was influenced by Paul VI’s Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and by the Puebla Conference (1979) and stressed the local and foreign missionary dimensions of the Church.²⁷ The main goal of missionary action was “to establish local Churches here and now”²⁸ and promote an integral evangelization. In the words of Llanque, the slogan “we are the Church and we are the people”²⁹ brought the laity to participate actively in the diverse ministries of the Church. This understanding of the Church had a sound basis in the Gospel, with the Apostolic and Patristic Traditions counterbalancing the exacerbated clericalism and institutional power of the Church.

Actually, the **Systematization of Andean Theology** began in 1990 with the first *Encuentro de Teología y Pastoral Andina* (Gathering on Andean Theology and Ministry). It was organized by the Aymara and Quechua pastoral agents and missionaries of Bolivia and Peru and held in Yunguyo, Puno, Peru.³⁰ These Gatherings on Andean Theology and Ministry have contributed enormously to understanding the Andean cultures, the structuring of the joint initiatives of the Andean ministry, and the systematization of ecumenical Andean Theologies. Today, these Gatherings provide a more communal way of embracing Andean Theology. Because of the changes in the hierarchy and the pastoral views of some Catholic Dioceses in the highlands of Bolivia and Peru, these Gatherings have continued at the ecumenical grassroots level. For example, the Nineteenth Gathering was held in October 2009 in Juliaca, Puno, Peru.³¹ The strength of the Andean Ministry and Theology comes from the consistency of the cultural and theological themes discussed at these gatherings. For example, at these gatherings participants name the ritual logic, the oral tradition, the experiences of everyday life, and the role of *Pachamama* (Mother Earth) as the theological locus of the Andean Theologies.³² These historical, theological, missiological, and ecclesiological considerations of the evangelization of the Andean Churches have established the context for **an emerging rainbow of Andean Theologies**. In the next section, the discussion will focus on the joint initiatives of the Quechua and Aymara local Churches of Bolivia and Peru.

3. The Emergence of a Rainbow of Andean Christian Theologies

In the last two decades, the joint initiatives of Catholic and Protestant Churches have strengthened the Andean Christian Theological Movement. Protestant and Catholic Indigenous leaders, pastoral agents, missionaries, pastors, priests, bishops, theologians, and the social scientists of Peru and Bolivia organized twenty Annual Gatherings on Andean Theology and Ministry from 1990 to 2010, to address the diverse cultural and theological concerns of the Andean Local Churches. In 1990, the Andean Theology Movement was connected to the Latin American Native Ministry and Theology Movement sponsored by the Latin American Ecumenical Coalition on Native Ministry (AELAPI), and the Office of Native Ministry of the Latin American Catholic Bishops' Council (CELAM). The Latin American Coalition on Native Ministry has successfully held six international ecumenical conferences on native theologies: Mexico 1990, Panama 1993, Bolivia 1997, Paraguay 2002, Brazil 2006, and El Salvador 2009. CELAM's Office on Native Ministry held four symposia: Bogota, Colombia 1997; Riobamba, Ecuador 2002; Guatemala City 2006; and Lima, Peru 2010.³³

The emergence of the Andean Theology Movement is a part of the process of the cultural and intellectual decolonization of theological production, geared to developing theological thought under the social, cultural, and philosophical paradigms of the Andean Peoples. The Andean Theology Movement is also part of the renewal of the Andean Local Churches, in their "effort to express the Christian faith in terms understandable to the members of those cultures and, eventually, to a theological valuing of these indigenous religious experiences and cultural expressions".³⁴ Therefore, Andean people are creating inculturated and contextual theologies from the margins of Andean society by identifying new theological subjects and reflecting on new theological topics, that have so often been ignored by the dominant Western theologies.

According to Llanque, Andean Theology, as a branch of native theology, is a theology of protest and proposal. It is a protest theology against the socio-political, economic, and cultural marginalization of Indigenous People; in this sense, it is a theology of resistance. In recent years, the voice of the Indigenous People has begun to articulate the hopes and aspirations for a better future for the Indigenous and for poor people in general; in this sense, it is a theology of proposal, open to new paradigms and possibilities enlightened and nourished by the ancestral wisdom and values of the Andean peoples.³⁵ For clarity's sake, I understand **Andean Theology** (*teología andina*), in the singular, to mean a theological category that agglutinates all the theological aspirations of all the Indigenous People of the Andes, and **Andean Theologies** (*teologías andinas*), in the plural, as the local production of each culture, such as a Quechua theology or an Aymara theology.³⁶

In the context of the decolonization and renewal process of local Churches in the Andes, the elaboration of Andean Theology is placed within the larger movement of native theology (*teología india*), which promotes contextual and inculturated theologies from the perspective of the Indigenous Peoples and nations of Abya Yala.³⁷ The Andean Region is one of five macro regions proposed in the development of native ministry and theology, along with Mesoamerica, the Southern Cone, the Caribbean, and Amazonia.³⁸ Today, it is common among the Catholic and Protestant institutions involved in native ministry and theology to speak about regional ministries and theologies. For example, it is correct to speak about Andean or Mesoamerican Ministries and Theologies. These macro cultural regions are based on the cultural and geographical similarities of their peoples, without jeopardizing the plurality of cultures and theologies within each macro region. In the same way, one may speak of Quechua, Aymara, Uro, or Mestizo Theologies in the Andean Region as well as of Quiche, K'ekchi, Mam, Poconchi, Zapotec, or Zoque Theologies in Mesoamerica. Estermann states:

Andean theology is not a 'genitive theology' such as the theology of Grace or theology of the Kingdom, but an 'adjective theology'. However, the adjective '*Andino*' (Andean) does not refer to a particular content or object such as in the case of 'eschatological theology' or 'pneumatological theology', but to the context as a theological locus. Therefore, 'Andean Theology' is inserted in a series of socio-cultural and ethnic contextualizations of the theological task which have taken form in the last thirty years,

here in America, as well in Africa and Asia. It is not only the result of an increased awareness of the Indigenous Peoples and their worldviews, but also is the result of intercultural reflection.³⁹

Lo Andino (the Andean) is a geographical and anthropological concept before becoming a cultural and ethnic reference.⁴⁰ Here, it is important **to clarify that Andean Theology**, as an adjectival expression, does not refer to a theology made in the Andes or to a theology of Andean topics, but **refers to a theology made from the Andean socio-cultural and religious context**, a kind of contextual and inculturated theology. In paraphrasing the words of Diego Irrarázaval, at the Fifth Gathering on Andean Theology and Ministry, I affirm that: Andean Theology is based on a deep and long experience of God by past and present generations of Andeans; it is a systematic narrative communicated orally from one generation to the next; it is a historical theology in permanent dialogue with other theologies, denominations, and religions; it is a communal theology always in relationship with the cosmos, the transcendent, and others; and it is an offering of thoughts freely given to the divine.⁴¹ Thus, Andean Theology is not a European theology with an Andean outfit, nor is it mere external adaptation, such as using Andean symbols in Roman Catholic or Pentecostal liturgies (for example, replacing the chasuble with the poncho or the altar cloth with the multicoloured mantle). "Andean Theology is a native theology, not elaborated from European or Western paradigms, but made from its own cultural worldview and philosophy".⁴² In this sense:

Andean Theology ... is prayerful, festive, celebrative of the whole body, of the Earth, and of the universe.... [A]s Bishop Juan Godayol affirmed, Andean Theology is a theology of the heart, of reciprocity, of affectivity, of relationality, of discovery and of love; it is not a *theologia mentis*. Domingo Llanque justifies the existence of Andean Theology as follows: "We began with the premise of the existence of an Andean Christianity; the Andeans have accepted a God presented by the missionaries, but their understanding of the relationship with God has been reformulated from their own cultural contexts".⁴³

First, Andean Theology is emerging as a narrative, contextual, and inculturated theology rather than as a rational and abstract theology. It is a theology of the heart, not of the brain; this indicates a different logic and a different understanding of the theological production.

Second, Andean Theology is a communal theology; all the members of the Andean community (humans, animals, plants, lakes, rivers, mountains, etc.), are the theological actors and the theological locus. Andean Theology is people's theology, a communal reflection of faith informed by the religious and cultural values of the Andeans; in this sense, its legitimacy does not belong to a particular university or academic circle.

Elements of the Andean Christian Theologies

Andean Theologies: Under the title "Andean Theology" two types coexist: Andean Christian Theology and Andean Traditional Theology.

1) Andean Christian Theology seeks to bring ancestral religions (Quechua, Aymara, or Uro) into dialogue with the Christian faith and to contribute to a true inculturation process of the Christian faith among the Quechua, Aymara, and Uro cultures. "*Teología Andina* is a Christian theology because it is inspired by the Gospel message and the testimony of faith resulting from the proclamation of the Word of God. Andean Theology justifies the process of the re-inculturation of the Christian faith in the Andean context".⁴⁴

The proponents of Andean Christian Theologies represent the great majority of Quechuas and Aymaras who have expressly desired to engage in theological production.⁴⁵ These are the members of the Andean *ayllus* who want to be faithful to their Andean cultural and religious traditions and to the Christian message received from their Christian denominations. They initiated the systematization of Andean Christian Theologies from within their Christian traditions (Catholic or Protestant) and their theological production has quickly

reached ecumenical circles. Colque observes that “ecumenical theological production has been visible in the joint gatherings, workshops, and publications”⁴⁶ of Catholic and Protestant churches. Missiologically, the development of Andean Christian Theologies is situated in the dialogue between the Gospel and cultures, called inculturation, and ecumenical dialogue, which motivates unity among Christian traditions.

II) Andean Traditional Theology is produced by Quechuas and Aymaras who have maintained their traditional Andean religions or forms of spirituality. The proponents of Traditional Andean Theologies are the members of remote and isolated communities of the Andes. In recent years, this movement has been sponsored by different groups of Quechuas or Aymaras motivated by various rationales. The first rationale involves Andeans who have had bitter experiences in their contact with Christian churches. The second rationale is associated with Andeans who have consciously embraced the traditional religions of their ancestors. The third rationale is associated with Andeans who have been critical of the past and present wrongdoings of the Christian churches. Lastly, there are Andeans who have used traditional religions and forms of spirituality for political and academic reasons. The missiological approach with proponents of this theological thought will be through interreligious dialogue, which is a part of the mission of the Church. This encompasses a dialogue in truth and justice, accepting Andean religions as true religions.⁴⁷

The Point of Departure: The development of Andean Christian Theologies acknowledges the fact that the Aymara and Quechua peoples are Christian, forming communities of disciples of Christ organized in local Churches. Lorenzo Monasterios, in citing Xavier Albó and Enrique Jordá, states that: “the Aymaras and Quechuas have been evangelized; they have received the faith and made it a part of their religious practice. Therefore, these peoples are Christian”.⁴⁸ As I mentioned before, Andean Christianity is unique because “the Andean people, without renouncing their cultures, have become Christian, integrating the Gospel values and contents into their worldview system”.⁴⁹ In this sense, Andean Theologies, as any other Christian theology, are grounded in the Christian Tradition, Sacred Scripture, the living Apostolic Tradition, and Andean cultural traditions. They are contextual and inculturated theologies rooted in basic Christian theology.

First, the proponents of these theologies have acknowledged that faith is a free gift of God given to men and women from all eras in history and of all cultures. Theology is not developed with the purpose of believing in God, because belief in God exists prior to the reasoning of faith.

Second, theology is a critical intellectual aspect of our faith; therefore it is a human and cultural product. It is a way to understand ourselves and the world around us from the perspective of faith.

Third, the uniqueness of the Christian faith lies in the historic revelation of Jesus Christ. Jesus of Nazareth, by his death and Resurrection, became the Christ of our faith. He was incarnated, born, lived, and died in a particular historical time and under the parameters of the Jewish culture (cf. *Ad Gentes*, n.10). Therefore, the departure point of Andean Theologies is faith in Jesus Christ and God's presence, as manifested by “the seeds of the Word”, in the Indigenous traditions of our cultures.⁵⁰

The Subjects of Andean Theologies: In Abya Yala, the emergence of Indigenous People is perceived as a sign of grace and a new Pentecost in the “society and the Church” (DA, n. 91).⁵¹ Today, Indigenous People have become historical subjects and ecclesial actors. Indigenous Peoples, especially in the Andes, have become increasingly active participants in the social, political, economic, religious, and cultural leadership of their communities, cities, countries, and regions. Therefore, Andean people are not only subjects of the Christian faith, but also subjects of their own theologies, forms of spirituality, liturgies, and ministries. According to León's synthesis of the Fourth Gathering on Andean Ministry and Theology, it is important to recognize the community of believers “as theological subjects”; it is urgent for them to reflect on Andean values and Christian teaching; and it is healthy to keep the tension between being Christian and Andean without renouncing one's cultural identity and values.⁵²

These assertions create the awareness that Andean Theologies are communal theologies and that the proponents of Andean Theologies are accountable to their local communities.

Those who participate in the Andean Theology and Ministry Gatherings of Peru and Bolivia are mainly Aymara and Quechua pastoral agents, lay ministers, permanent deacons, women and men religious, priests, Pastors, and Catholic and Protestant bishops; these people are deeply committed to the life of faith, religious expressions, and theologies of the Andean peoples.⁵³ Protestant and Catholic participants state that “we are walking together in a slow and fruitful process of theological reflection, which takes into account our identity and culture”.⁵⁴ We also consider as subjects of Andean Theologies the foreign pastoral agents and professional theologians who are accompanying and reflecting on an inculturated evangelization of Andean peoples. They are referred to as “friend theologians”.⁵⁵

Characteristics of Andean Theologies: The proponents of the Andean Theology Movement have identified the following characteristics of their theologies: everyday life, ritual logic, and oral traditions.

First, the participants have stated consistently that everyday life is where human realization and religious experiences takes place. The individual and collective experiences of the Aymara and Quechua peoples take place in the context of everyday life, since that is where childbirth, parenting, friendship, commitment, success, happiness, illness, death, betrayal, failures, and mistakes happen. This Andean theological locus finds support in the Teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which states that “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties” (GS, n. 1),⁵⁶ the graces and sins, the life and death of contemporary men and women are part of the concerns of Christian churches and their theologies. In the everyday experience of the *ayllus*, life is appreciated, the presence and grace of God is perceived, and the struggle for a better life is strengthened.⁵⁷ Therefore, Andeans accept or reject the presence of the true and living God in the context of everyday life.

Second, the Aymara and the Quechua are ritualistic people; they perform rituals from sunrise to sunset and the cycles of human and agricultural life are marked with proper rituals. “In the Andes, a ritual is a privileged means of dialogue with the divine, [the cosmos, and the others]; ritual is a subtle and complex language. Speech is not necessarily verbal, but ritual. The whole cosmos speaks and Andeans respond through rituals”.⁵⁸ Andean rituals have their own logic, sequence and interpretation. For example, *ch’alla* is a ritual commonly practiced in the Andean world in which the Andean person, family, or community reciprocates with the divine, the cosmos, and the others. Therefore, *ch’alla* expresses a sacramental dimension of Andean life; each Andean ritual is a sacrament of life, which is performed on a daily, seasonal, and annual basis.⁵⁹

The **third** theological locus is the oral tradition, the local traditions in the Aymara and Quechua *ayllus* which have been handed down through stories from one generation to the next. Local traditions explain the origin of people, cities, geography, animals, and plants; they also explain the purpose of life, the sense of sacredness, and the presence of God in the Andean world.⁶⁰ The objective of the oral tradition is to convey the main message of a story through diverse forms and styles. The story is recreated each time it is told and listened to; and the story is constantly renewed by the context in which it is told.

Methods and Methodologies: The plurality of cultures and theologies poses a methodological challenge to the development of native theologies among the peoples and nations of Abya Yala. In the development of native theologies, there is no single theological method because each theology shapes its own particular method which responds best to the exigencies of that particular theology.⁶¹ The Proceedings of the Andean Theology and Ministry Conferences, referring to methods and methodologies, use loose terms such as methodological steps, methodological guidelines, the Andean method or Andean logic. The see–judge–act method adopted by the Latin American Catholic Bishops in the Conferences of Medellín, Puebla,

and Aparecida has been used in the development and systematization of Andean Theologies. This inductive methodology was initially used by the Catholic Action Movement, and it was fully developed and popularized in the life and experience of Base Ecclesial Communities throughout Latin America. It takes “a three-step approach: describe as accurately as possible the reality in which the Church resides; reflect on this condition using the Bible and Tradition; [and] plan for action to improve the situation”.⁶² In Aparecida the Bishops stated that “this method enables us to combine systematically, a faithful perspective for viewing reality; incorporating criteria from faith and reason for discerning and appraising it critically; and acting accordingly as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ” (*AD*, n. 19).⁶³ The Bishops praised the theological and pastoral richness of this method which the leaders of local Churches and the proponents of Andean Theologies have used to collect, analyze, systematize, and socialize the cultural and theological knowledge brought to, and shared at, the conferences.

In the Third Gathering of Andean Theology and Ministry, León and Llanque explicitly suggested “the use of the see–judge–act method” in the systematization of Andean Theologies.⁶⁴ For example, Carlos Flores Lizana used the see–judge–act method for the discussions and the layout of the proceedings of the Eleventh Andean Theology and Ministry Gathering held in Ayaviri, Puno, Peru. At this Conference the reality of “the Family in the Andean World” was discussed. On the first day the social, cultural, economic, and political reality of Andean families was critically examined. On the second day the critical reflection focused on the struggles of Andean families with the help of biblical, magisterial, and scientific insights; the third day was spent in pastoral planning, certain local actions were strengthened and new initiatives were encouraged to overcome the struggles of Andean families.⁶⁵

The see–judge–act method was first used in Liberation Theology circles but the proponents of Andean Theologies have enriched the method by combining social and cultural elements in the systematization of Andean Theologies. Sociologically, the Andean peoples have experienced extreme poverty, social marginalization, reduced access to farm land, a lack of political participation, and illiteracy. Culturally, the Andean people have rich cultural values, traditions, languages, and ways of life; they are the descendants of the Tiahuanaco and Inca Civilizations. Therefore, the socio-political context and cultural values contained in the Andean cosmology have become the basis of their theologies. The Quechua and Aymara have envisioned a narrative and contemplative theology. They have identified and suggested a systematic study of the Sacred Scriptures, cosmology, creation, ecclesiology, sacraments, liturgy, morality and ethics, Christology, and lay formation from an Andean perspective to promote the development of Andean Theologies, opening them to intercultural, ecumenical, and interreligious dialogue.⁶⁶

Conclusion:

In this presentation, I have tried to demonstrate that the emergence of the Indigenous Peoples; the development of vibrant inculturated local Churches; the systematization of Andean Christian Theologies in Latin America have all been part of a long historical process, which began in the sixteenth century, and that they are now showing their fruits in the current civil and ecclesial context of the region. After this brief historical and critical description, I have come to the following conclusions:

First, the active participation of the Indigenous Peoples in the political, economic, social, cultural, and religious circles shows the progressive acceptance of the indigenous movements within the wider society, the maturity of the indigenous political and ecclesial leaders, and the viability of the indigenous proposals within society and the Church. The emergence of the Indigenous Peoples, Afro Americans, women, and the organized poor can be seen, both as a gift and a challenge for our times.

Second, the Teaching of the Vatican Council has reshaped the universal Church but influenced in a particular way the development of vibrant local Churches in the Andes. The Post-Conciliar Theology and Missionary Practice has implemented the ecclesiology of “the People of God” by promoting lay formation and participation in the evangelization of the Andean Churches. Lay participation in the Church has also empowered the social and political participation of the Andeans in the local, regional, national and international instances of decision-making. The Quechua and Aymara, who have been ignored for centuries, have claimed their rights to keep alive their cultures, and retain the land of their ancestors, their language and cultural values, access to education, social and economic development in their respective countries of origin.

Third, the configuration of the local Andean Churches has begun with the participation of the Indigenous in the structures of the Church as lay leaders, women and men religious and ordained ministers. The “incarnated Church” of the Andes is emerging from the on-going dialogue between the Christian faith and Andean cultures. These emerging local Churches are members of the Church of Christ. According to Santo Domingo, n. 248, the Andean Churches born from the inculturation of the Gospel in the Andean cultures are called to articulate their own liturgy, theology and spirituality with a Quechua and Aymara face, heart, mind and soul.⁶⁷

Fourth, in the midst of the “dramatic and unequal encounter” of the first evangelization (AD, n. 4), the Andeans embraced Christianity without putting aside their cultural values and the religious expressions inherited from their ancestors. They were able to integrate Andean-Christian components into their practice of faith, devotions, religiosity, liturgies, spiritualities, and theologies. The Quechua and Aymara peoples have fashioned a unique Christianity based on the Andean and Christian traditions inherited from their forefathers.

Fifth, the emergence of “a rainbow of multicolour theologies”⁶⁸ in the local Christian churches of the Andes is located within the multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-religious context of the peoples and nations of the Andes. Andean Theologies are contextual Christian theologies. They are grounded in the Christian Tradition, the Sacred Scriptures, the living Apostolic Tradition, and the Andean cultural traditions of the Aymara and Quechua disciples of Christ. Therefore, the point of departure for Andean Theologies is faith in Jesus Christ and in God’s presence manifested in “the seeds of the Word” in the Indigenous traditions of our cultures.

Sixth, the Catholic Bishops of Latin America acknowledged the emergence of the Indigenous Peoples as “a sign of grace and a new Pentecost in the Church and society” (AD, n. 91). Today, the Quechuas and Aymaras have seen themselves as historical subjects and ecclesial actors; they are not only subjects of the Christian faith, but also subjects of their own theologies, spiritualities, liturgies, structures, and ministries. Therefore, the rainbow of Andean communities is a theological subject, the entire Christian community is the subject of its own reflections, and the Catholic and Protestant Indigenous and Western theologians are subjects of Andean Theologies.

Seventh, the proponents of the Andean Theology Movement have identified the following characteristics:

One) the individual and collective experiences of faith of the Aymaras and Quechuas happen in the context of everyday life as the locus of human and divine realization. Andeans accept or reject the presence of the true and living God in the context of everyday life.

Two) the Aymara and the Quechua are ritualistic peoples. They perform rituals from sunrise to sunset, and the cycles of human and agricultural life are marked with proper rituals; rituals are privileged means of dialogue with the cosmos, the divine, and “the others”. The Quechuas and Aymaras are members of oral cultures. These peoples have passed down from one generation to the next their cultural and religious experiences through oral stories with all their dynamicity and constant creativity.

Finally, Andean Christian Theologies are in dialogue with other cultures, traditional religions, local churches, Christian denominations, and contextual theologies of the Andes. Missiologically speaking, the development of Andean Theologies is situated in an intercultural, interreligious, and ecumenical context.

May the Spirit of the Risen Christ continue to inspire the life and ministry of the Andean Churches and the diverse local Churches spread around the world.

END NOTES

¹ See Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed. *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, America Press, and Association Press, 1966).

² CELAM, *Conferencias Generales: Río de Janeiro, Medellín, Puebla, Santo Domingo* (Santiago de Chile: San Pablo, 1993); V Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano y de el Caribe CELAM, *Aparecida: Documento Conclusivo* (Cochabamba: Paulinas Librería, Conferencia Episcopal de Bolivia, Editorial Don Bosco, Editorial Verbo Divino, 2007).

³ See Alfred T. Hennelly, J.S., *Santo Domingo and Beyond: Documents and Commentaries from the Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops*, First ed. (New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 243. (SD 244).

⁴ See Patricio Guerrero Arias, *La Cultura: Estrategias Conceptuales para Comprender la Identidad, la Diversidad, la Alteridad, y la Diferencia*, Primera ed. (Quito: Abya Yala, 2002), 51, 89.

⁵ See UN-DESA, *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples* (New York: United Nations 2009), 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷ UNFPA, "Población y Desarrollo", El Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas <http://lac.unfpa.org/public/pid/2023> (accessed 12 February 2011); Gregorio Irriarte, *Análisis Crítico de la Realidad: Compendio de Datos Actualizados*, 16th ed. (Cochabamba: Grupo Editorial Kipus, 2007), 177-178. The United Nations Population Fund's estimate of 570 million was based on 41 countries, including the small independent islands of the Caribbean. According to Iriarte, the Latin American population reached 498.8 million in 2000, and the 2007 estimate of 541 million is based on 32 countries of the region.

⁸ Gillette Hall and Harry Anthony Patrinos, *Latin America's Indigenous People* (Washington D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 2005); Nicanor Sarmiento Tupayupanqui, *Caminos de la Teología India* (Cochabamba: Verbo Divino, UCB, y Editorial Guadalupe, 2000), 19. The report of Hall and Patrinos speaks of 43 million Indigenous people comprising 10% of the Latin American and Caribbean population, which is a very cautious estimate. My estimate of 55 million comes from a work presented in 1999 which is more realistic.

⁹ See Nicanor Sarmiento Tupayupanqui, "Andean Christian Theologies, Elements of a Rainbow of Theological Voices of the Indigenous Peoples of Abya Yala: A Missiological and Anthropological Study of the Andean Trilogy" (Interdisciplinary Studies in Missiology and Cultural Anthropology, Graduate Theological Union, 2011), 32.

¹⁰ See Robert Albrow, "The Culture of Democracy and Bolivia's Indigenous Movements", in *Conference of the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs* (New York: The George Washington University Hortense Amsterdam House, 2005), 15.

¹¹ Henkjan Laats, "Propiedad y Autonomía en Comunidades Campesinas en el Perú, Proyecciones desde la Población", in *Proyecto de Ley de las Comunidades Campesinas y Nativas: Alternativas y Posibles efectos en la Región*, ed. Casa Campesina y Centro Bartolomé de las Casas (Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, Cusco: Casa Campesina y Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, 1999), 1-2.

¹² See Antonio Aparecido da Silva, "Vida Religiosa y Desafíos Culturales" (accessed 8 April 2012).

¹³ See Salvador Martí i Puig, "The Emergence of the Indigenous Movements in Latin America and Their Impact on the Latin American Political Scene: Interpretative Tools at the Local and Global Levels", *Latin American Perspectives*, issue 175, vol. 37, no. 6 (2010): 77-79.

¹⁴ Roberta Rice and Donna Lee van Cott, "The Emergence and Performance of the Indigenous Peoples' Parties in South America: A Subnational Statistical Analysis", *Comparative Political Studies* Vol. 39, no. 6 (2006): 709; Martí i Puig, "The Emergence of the Indigenous Movements in Latin America and Their Impact on the Latin American Political Scene", 74-75.

- ¹⁵ See Martí i Puig, "The Emergence of the Indigenous Movements in Latin America and Their Impact on the Latin American Political Scene", 74-75.
- ¹⁶ IWGIA, *The Indigenous World 2006*, International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (Copenhagen, Denmark: IWGIA, 2006), 182-184.
- ¹⁷ IWGIA, *The Indigenous World 2010*, International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (Copenhagen, Denmark: IWGIA, 2010), 197.
- ¹⁸ CELAM, *Aparecida: Documento Conclusivo*, 31, (AD, n. 75).
- ¹⁹ Domingo Llanque Chana, *Vida y Teología Andina*, First ed. (Cuzco: Centro Bartolomé de las Casas y Centro de Estudios Aymaras, 2004), 179.
- ²⁰ Pius V, *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, trans., John A. McHugh and Charles J. Callan (Rome and Turin: The Catholic Primer, 1566; reprint, 1923), 77.
- ²¹ Enrique Denzinger, *El Magisterio de la Iglesia: Manual de los símbolos, definiciones y declaraciones de la Iglesia en materia de fe y costumbres*, trans., Daniel Ruíz Bueno (Barcelona: Editorial Herder, 1963), 240, 456, 538. D-468 affirms that "outside of her [the Catholic Church] there is no salvation neither forgiveness of sins" (cf. Acts 4:12. D-1379, 29 states that "outside the Church one cannot attain any grace". D-1647 states that "outside of the Roman Catholic Church no one could be saved, that she is the only ark of salvation".
- ²² Pius XII, "Fidei Donum", Papal Encyclicals Online <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius12/P12FIDEI.HTM> (accessed 30 June 2011).
- ²³ Llanque Chana, *Vida y Teología Andina*, 181.
- ²⁴ Pius XII, "Mystici Corporis Christi", American Library Association (accessed 14 May 2009).
- ²⁵ Llanque Chana, *Vida y Teología Andina*, 191.
- ²⁶ See Abbott, ed. *The Documents of Vatican II*, 14-106. The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)* chapters 1-5.
- ²⁷ Paul VI, "Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi", The Holy See http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html (accessed 21 February 2011); John Eagleson and Philip Scharper, *Puebla and Beyond*, trans., John Drury, First ed. (New York: Orbis Books, 1979), 111-285.
- ²⁸ Llanque Chana, *Vida y Teología Andina*, 192.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.
- ³⁰ Chuquito-Peru IDEA, "Un Camino recorrido. 15 años de Encuentros "Teología y Pastoral Andina: Perú-Bolivia: Una Memoria interpretativa histórica y teológica", in *Teología Andina: El tejido de la Fe Indígena, Tomo I*, ed. Josef Estermann, Colección "Teología y Filosofía Andinas" No. 2 (La Paz: Instituto Superior Ecuaménico Andino de Teología Andina (ISEAT), 2006), 312-348; IDECA, "Encuentros de Teología Andina: Bolivia-Peru 1990-2003", (Puno: Instituto de Estudios de las Culturas Andinas [IDECA], 2011). The unpublished binder of IDECA contains first-hand material of the Gatherings on Andean Theology and Ministry of Bolivia and Peru: convocations, letters, group discussions, summaries of synthesizers, conferences, and the list of the participants. For practical reasons I gave consecutive page numbers to the binder for my personal use, which do not correspond to those in the original volume.
- ³¹ Narciso Valencia and others, "Convocatoria: XIX Encuentro: Teología y Pastoral Andina, Juliaca, Perú 20 al 24 de Octubre 2009", (Juliaca, Puno, Perú: IDECA, 2009).
- ³² IDEA, "Un Camino Recorrido", 325-326.
- ³³ See Nicanor Sarmiento Tupayupanqui, "Native Theology in Latin America: a brief history", *Mission: Journal of Mission Studies* xv, nos. 1 & 2 (2008): 317-321.
- ³⁴ John F. Gorski, "How the Catholic Church in Latin America Became Missionary", in *Sharing Diversity in the Missiological Research and Education*, ed. Stanislaus, Lazar, SVD, and John Gorski, MM (Kashmere Gate, Delhi: Ishvani Kendra, 2006), 214.
- ³⁵ Llanque Chana, *Vida y Teología Andina*, 117.
- ³⁶ I adopt the analogous expression of López commonly used in Latin America: "*teología india*, in the singular, as a theological category that agglutinates all the theological aspirations of all the Indigenous People of Latin America; and *teologías indias*, in the plural, as the local productions of each culture". See Eleazar López Hernández, "Teología India Hoy", in *Teología India, Primer Encuentro Taller Latinoamericano de México 1990*, ed. Ediciones CENAMI y ABYA YALA, Teología India Hoy (Cayambe, Ecuador: Impresión Talleres ABYA YALA, 1991), 10-12; Eleazar López Hernández, "Teologías Indias de Hoy", in *Teología India, Segundo Encuentro Taller Latinoamericano de Panamá 1993*, ed. Ediciones CENAMI y ABYA YALA (Cayambe, Ecuador: Impresión Gráficas Modelo, 1994), 18-22.

- ³⁷ Josef Estermann, ed. *Teología Andina: El tejido de la Fe Indígena, Tomo I*, First ed., 3 vols., Colección "Teología y Filosofía Andinas", vol. 2 (La Paz: Instituto Superior Ecueménico Andino de Teología Andina (ISEAT), 2006), 9-12.
- ³⁸ Teología India, *Primer Encuentro Taller Latinoamericano de México 1990*, ed. Ediciones CENAMI y ABYA YALA, First ed. (Cayambe, Ecuador: Impresión Talleres ABYA YALA, 1991), 64-78.
- ³⁹ Estermann, ed. *Teología Andina: El tejido de la Fe Indígena, Tomo I*, 143-144. Emphasis added.
- ⁴⁰ *Lo andino* is more than an expression; it is a multifaceted and polyvalent concept or category used in people's everyday interactions and in the academic world. *Lo andino* is given different meanings by the diverse historical and theological subjects and social and ecclesial actors who live and interact in this region, such as local, regional and national "institutions, political parties, churches, non-governmental organizations, social movements, and individuals". See Josef Estermann and others, "Lo Andino, una realidad que nos interpela", in *Teología Andina: El tejido de la Fe Indígena, Tomo I*, ed. Josef Estermann (La Paz: Instituto Superior Ecueménico Andino de Teología Andina (ISEAT), 2006), 50-51; Alison Spedding Pallet, *Religión en los Andes: Extirpación de Idolatrías y Modernidad de la Fe Andina* (La Paz: Instituto Superior Ecueménico Andino de Teología [ISEAT], 2008), 14-18.
- ⁴¹ IDECA, "Encuentros de Teología Andina: Bolivia-Peru 1990-2003", 112.
- ⁴² Estermann, ed. *Teología Andina: El tejido de la Fe Indígena, Tomo I*, 145.
- ⁴³ IDEA, "Un Camino Recorrido", 327.
- ⁴⁴ Estermann, ed. *Teología Andina: El tejido de la Fe Indígena, Tomo I*, 144-145.
- ⁴⁵ John F. Gorski, "Dialogue with Traditional Religions: The Singular Contribution of Francis Cardinal Arinze's Letter on Pastoral Attention to Traditional Religions", (Cochabamba, Bolivia: Universidad Católica Boliviana, 2001), 4.
- ⁴⁶ Abraham Colque Jiménez, "El Caminar hacia las Teologías Andinas", in *Teología Andina: El tejido de la Fe Indígena, Tomo I*, ed. Josef Estermann, Colección "Teología y Filosofía Andinas" (La Paz: Instituto Superior Ecueménico Andino de Teología Andina (ISEAT), 2006), 125.
- ⁴⁷ Gorski, "Dialogue with Traditional Religions", 2; Francis Card. Arinze and Bishop Michael L. Fitzgerald, "Pastoral Attention to Traditional Religions: Letter of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences in Asia, the Americas, and Oceania", Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_21111993_trad-relig_en.html (accessed 10 April 2010).
- ⁴⁸ IDECA, "Encuentros de Teología Andina: Bolivia-Peru 1990-2003", 46. Lorenzo Monasterios was the synthesizer of the Second Gathering on Andean Ministry and Theology, held in Tiwanaku, Bolivia (1991).
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 24; IDEA, "Un Camino Recorrido", 334. Ismael León prepared a summary of the Andean Ministry and Theology Gatherings held from 1990-1991.
- ⁵⁰ See Nicanor Sarmiento Tupayupanqui, "La Teología India es un Hecho Histórico en América Latina", in *En Busca de la Tierra sin Mal: Mitos de Origen y Sueños de Futuro de los Pueblos Indios. Memoria del IV Encuentro-Taller Ecueménico Latinoamericano de Teología India, (Ikua Sati, Asunción, Paraguay, del 6-10 de Mayo de 2002)*, ed. Teología India (Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya Yala, Colección Iglesia, Pueblos y Culturas No. 60-61, 2004), 230.
- ⁵¹ CELAM, *Final Document of the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops' Conferences: Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ, so that Our Peoples May Have Life in Him. "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life"* (Jn 14:6), (Washington D.C.: Publication of USCCB, 2008), 50.
- ⁵² Synthesis of the Fourth Gathering on Andean Theology and Ministry held in Copacabana (1993), See IDECA, "Encuentros de Teología Andina: Bolivia-Peru 1990-2003", 30.
- ⁵³ IDEA, "Un Camino Recorrido", 322-323. The Report names the following Protestant Churches: the Evangelical church of Bolivia; Lutheran; Methodist; and some ecumenical centers.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 323.
- ⁵⁵ See Eleazar López Hernández, "Teologías Indias en las Iglesia Métodos y Propuestas", in *En Busca de la Tierra sin Mal: Mitos de Origen y Sueños de Futuro de los Pueblos Indios. Memoria del IV Encuentro-Taller Ecueménico Latinoamericano de Teología India, (Ikua Sati, Asunción, Paraguay del 6-10 de Mayo de 2002)*, ed. Teología India Memoria (Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya Yala, Colección Iglesia, Pueblos y Culturas, No. 60-61, 2004), 282.
- ⁵⁶ See Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (GS, n. 1) in Abbott, ed. *The Documents of Vatican II*, 199-200.
- ⁵⁷ Leon's synthesis of the Fourth Gathering on Andean Theology and Ministry held in Copacabana (1993), See IDECA, "Encuentros de Teología Andina: Bolivia-Peru 1990-2003", 29.

⁵⁸ IDEA, "Un Camino Recorrido", 326; IDECA, "Encuentros de Teología Andina: Bolivia-Peru 1990-2003", 20, 28, 29.

⁵⁹ IDEA, "Un Camino Recorrido", 326; IDECA, "Encuentros de Teología Andina: Bolivia-Peru 1990-2003", 20.

⁶⁰ IDEA, "Un Camino Recorrido", 326.

⁶¹ See López Hernández, "in Paraguay 2002", 282.

⁶² Edward L. Cleary, *How Latin America Saved the Soul of the Catholic Church* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009), 108.

⁶³ CELAM, *Aparecida Concluding Document*, 31.

⁶⁴ IDECA, "Encuentros de Teología Andina: Bolivia-Peru 1990-2003", 27, 59.

⁶⁵ IDEA, "Un Camino Recorrido", 326; IDECA, "Encuentros de Teología Andina: Bolivia-Peru 1990-2003", 253-267.

⁶⁶ There are a number of theologians working on different theological themes, for example, Arnold and Chipana Quispe on biblical themes from the Andean perspective, and Valencia and Jordá on creation and Andean cosmology. See IDECA, "Encuentros de Teología Andina: Bolivia-Peru 1990-2003", 27, 59; IDEA, "Un Camino Recorrido", 326-327; Simón Pedro Arnold, "¿Cómo hacer Teología Cristiana desde los Andes? Un recorrido dialogado de diferentes campos de la teología en perspectiva de teología andina", in *Teología Andina: El Tejido de la Fe Indígena, Tomo II*, ed. Josef Estermann, Colección "Teología y Filosofía Andinas" (La Paz: Instituto Superior Ecuménico Andino de Teología [ISEAT], 2006), 88-101; Sofía Chipana Quispe, "... Has ocultado estas cosas a sabios e inteligentes y se las has revelado a pequeños' (Mt 11:25)", in *Teología Andina: El Tejido de la Fe Indígena, Tomo II*, ed. Josef Estermann, Colección "Teología y Filosofía Andinas" (La Paz: Instituto Superior Ecuménico Andino de Teología [ISEAT], 2006), 411-430.

⁶⁷ See CELAM, *Las Conferencias Generales*, 585.

⁶⁸ Jhonny Montero Irala, "Aparecida en Manos de Indígenas una Lectura en Tiempos de Cambio", in *Y Después de Aparecida, ¿Qué?: Comentarios al Documento de Aparecida*, ed. Roberto Tomicha (Cochabamba: UCB, Editorial Verbo Divino, Instituto Latinoamericano de Misionología, 2007), 227.



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THE ROLE OF CARIBBEAN WOMEN IN SOCIETY AND IN THE CHURCH



In 2001 I delivered a lecture at a Conference on the Social Teaching of the Church entitled, "The Role of Women in Church and Society: Befriending the Dragon".

The subtitle was drawn from a fable that goes like this: Once upon a time, when the world was new and the Dragon lived in the deep, she was mother of all, a dark force whose dominion spread from shore to shore. Her awesome power shaped and sculpted the land; a cliff of granite destroyed, a dazzling white beach created. Islands and lagoons, sand-bars and channels emerged in response to her restless movement. But at her smile, the seas rippled in delight. Dancing sunbeams made diamonds on the waves, and gentle swells, resonating to her pleasure, caressed the shores of a thousand lands, sending warm tides surging through quiet wetlands, the swampy nursery of all living things.

Then one day the dragon was lured from the sea and banished to a cave. For reasons which seemed good at the time, it was decided by the powers-that-be to put an end to the restless destruction and creation of the Dragon. Something had to be done, and off to the cave she went.

As things turned out, the sea is still ruled by the children of the Dragon, but the Dragon passes sunless days confined to Stygian gloom. Should despair and anger drive the Dragon to leave her gloomy abode, the way is blocked by a guard, St. George by name. This fabled knight stands watch with sharp sword and stout spear, keeping the Dragon under control.

Once, it is said, the Dragon broke loose and her violent passion, compressed in the cave, poured out across the land. For days the Dragon raged until St. George and a hastily assembled band of junior knights corralled the beast.

Recently, however, a strange, heretical thought appeared in the land. What if the Dragon were not the terrible beast described so hideously in song and fable? Angry, for sure, but wouldn't you be angry if you had been locked in a cave for millennia? Perhaps the Dragon was only lonely. What would it mean to make friends with the Dragon?¹

The following year, the late Diane Jagdeo, a theologian from Trinidad, presented a paper at a Seminar at St. Michael's Theological College, Jamaica, on the topic, "Women's Contribution in Transforming the Church". Jagdeo likewise used a story, this time drawn from Greek and Roman mythology, to depict the experience of Caribbean women in the "underworld" of the Church. It is like the story of Æneas who, wanting to visit his father in the underworld, "consulted the Sibil, a prophetess inspired by Apollo". Æneas' appeal for help elicited this response from the Sibil, which revealed her 'prophetic' character:

The descent to the underworld is easy
Night and day the door to gloomy Dis stands open;
But to recall your steps and pass out to the upper air –
This is the task, this, the toil.²

The experience of women in history, both in society and in the Church, bear repeating here, particularly during this Luna Year of the Dragon in the Chinese Zodiac. This year

promises new life, creativity and adventure and this 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council also calls for a new Springtime of renewal and rebirth in the Church and society. As all images, both of these stories point to much more than immediately meets the eye and capture well the complexity and challenges entailed in addressing the topic: “The Role of Caribbean Women in Society and in the Church”. However, it is obvious that both images basically speak of the restrictions and obstacles that have been encountered in realizing a person’s full potential for making a more significant contribution to the development of Church and society, in accordance with all God-given talents. The key question that I raised in 2001, I now pose with even more urgency, in view of the heightened awareness of women’s issues in the Church today. This urgency is compounded by the increasing impact the feminist discourse and liberationist movements have on the consciousness and agenda of contemporary society, both nationally and globally. I asked then, “Is the freeing of women’s potential perhaps the missing link that, up until now, has prevented a real transformation in our ecclesial and societal structures?”³ This same question will guide the development of this presentation.

In proceeding, I shall:

- first, present a brief overview of the Caribbean context against the background of the contemporary postmodern world context;
- second, discuss the role of Caribbean women in society in reference to the development of the women’s movement, with specific reference to the Caribbean;
- third, briefly discuss the contribution of the Church throughout two hundred years of social teaching and especially since Vatican II which, fifty years ago, opened the windows of the Church to the modern world and allowed the refreshing and renewing breath of the Spirit of God to outline a vision and set the agenda for continued and even greater involvement in shaping the social conscience of our society, as she discerns and responds to the “signs of the times” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 4);
- fourth, discuss the role of Caribbean women in the Church against the background of the development of Caribbean theology, with special focus on its feminist variant that is reflected in the work of Caribbean women influenced by the vision of Vatican II;
- fifth, briefly explore the implications of a Trinitarian Ecclesiology for the Caribbean Church and society;
- and finally, draw such insights from the above as to point in the direction of a more adequate Caribbean ecclesial praxis, towards the transformation of Church and society.

I. The Caribbean Context

The Caribbean region is made up of an archipelago that lies between North and South America on the Atlantic side of the continent, and the four countries bordering on the Caribbean Sea on the northern coast of South America with another on the north-eastern coast of Central America. The Caribbean region is so complex that, it is commonly agreed, it defies adequate description. Fashioned by a colonial legacy that spans five hundred years of European and, subsequently, North American occupation, the region is marked by the various languages and cultures of the colonizers, including English, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, French and all the local Creole adaptations that subsequently developed from the introduction of slaves mainly from Africa and later, indentured servants primarily from Asia. Still later, traders and other immigrants, mainly from the Far and Middle East, added to the complexity of the region. The social, cultural, and religious beliefs and practices that each of these ethnic groups brought with them have persisted over the years in spite of the “Christianizing/civilizing” efforts of the colonial masters. The result has been the development of a distinctive plural society with the usual tensions associated with the differences of class, race, colour, sex, culture and religion that make the search for a common Caribbean identity an ever elusive reality and Caribbean integration a continual challenge.⁴

Globalization, linked to this colonial enterprise from its inception, is therefore not a new phenomenon in the experience of the Caribbean peoples where its mostly negative effects have created a region characterized, in the opinion of Kortright Davis, by endemic cultural alienation, dependency, and persistent poverty.⁵ The political structure that was thus created has left the legacy of a world divided into dominant and dependent, rich and poor, developed

and underdeveloped nations and situated the Caribbean region squarely among the latter groups. Hence, the Independence that was gained by the majority of the countries in the region, beginning in 1804 with the Haitian Revolution, and rising to a peak in the 1960s after a hiatus of more than a hundred years, still remains an aspiration.

Given this type of experience, it is not surprising that the liberal quest for freedom from all oppression places the Caribbean in a post-colonial space as it addresses issues that impact human life on all levels and in all areas, both theoretically and, perhaps more so, practically as it confronts the contemporary postmodern world. Certain aspects, values and aspirations of this postmodern world context will certainly resonate with the experiences of Caribbean women. Women, especially Caribbean women, are no strangers to the alienation, marginalization, dominance of scientific rationality, monocultural imposition, and the widening gap between the rich and poor that characterize the negative aspects of modernity. Caribbean women, like women elsewhere in the world who are engaged in their struggle for liberation and self-realization, endorse the alternative vision of the present postmodern worldview while being well aware of its negative aspects. Indeed, the positive values promoted by this alternative vision, viz.: inclusivity, unity in diversity, community, creativity, flexibility, interpersonal relationships and networking along with the metaphors, symbols, stories, imagination and feelings that traditionally are mostly associated with women. This is not to deny that the “values of industrial modernity”, identified by Hans Küng as “diligence ... rationality, order, thoroughness, punctuality, sobriety, achievement, and efficiency”,⁶ must still be affirmed in order not to fall into the trap of a postmodernist “innocent critique”, as Gregory Baum maintained.⁷ We shall see this as we consider the development of the women’s movement in the Anglophone Caribbean with a focus on Jamaica as a microcosm of the region as a whole.

II. The Role of Caribbean Women in Society: Focus on Jamaica

Aldrie Henry-Lee’s situational analysis, presented in a Desk Review Study of “The Status of Men and Women in Jamaica”, notes the following:

The 2009 Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica (ESSJ), states that women make up 50.7% of the population, however, they are woefully under-represented in the public and private decision-making spheres of the country. Although Jamaica has made an international commitment to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of at least 30% of women in parliament by 2015, the figure currently stands at 14%. Furthermore, a 2008 study found that women only constituted 16% of places on the boards of publicly listed companies and that 42.3% of these women reported being on multiple boards. The 2009 ESSJ further notes that although the current enrolment rate of women (40.7) in tertiary institutions is roughly twice that of men (20.3), females outperform males at all levels of the educational system and the job seeking rate of women (9.0) is greater than that of men (5.8) – the female unemployment rate stands at 14.8% compared to the male unemployment rate of 8.6%. Despite a numerical and skills advantage, women are unable to command a fair and equitable position in the labour market. Health-wise, maternal mortality rates have failed to improve significantly, women and girls have higher rates of depression and women and girls between the ages of 10 and 29 are more likely than their male counterparts to contract HIV/AIDS.⁸

These statistics, with minimal variations, are more or less representative of women’s status throughout the Caribbean and, indeed throughout the world. Understandably then, gender equality and justice in all areas of human life, albeit with the contextual priority of specific issues, are the basic concerns of Caribbean women, as of women globally. Cross cultural influences and social networking will therefore characterize the development of the women’s movement in Jamaica as elsewhere.

Significant strides have been made by the women’s movement in Jamaica since Lucille Mair first voiced her concerns regarding the marginalization of women in Jamaica and the unequal access to opportunities for self-advancement in the wake of Marcus Garvey’s advocacy for the liberation of the oppressed people of African descent. Similarly, the start of the Black

Power Movement in the 1960s, in tandem with the resurgence of feminist movements in other part of the world, formed part of the milieu from which Mair voiced her concerns. Later, under her influence, a Women and Development Institute was established at the regional higher education institution, the University of the West Indies, to identify and critique the philosophical and social scientific bases of the marginalization and oppression of women, both on a personal and on a structural level. This Institute would be later renamed Gender and Development Studies as it became apparent that the liberation of women was interconnected with that of men.⁹

In Jamaica, numerous women's organizations arose to address the various concerns and issues that were specific to women. The Association of Women's Organizations in Jamaica (AWOJA) has proven to be an effective forum for networking and collaboration among the various groups, albeit with greater or lesser success at specific periods.¹⁰ Of special significance, however, is the commitment of the Government of Jamaica to the principle of gender equality. This became obvious in the establishment of a "Women's Desk" to address the affairs of women in 1975. In accord with a global shift from Women and Development (WAD) to Gender and Development (GAD) the bureau adopted a gender perspective. In 2007, greater efforts were made to include men in the gender dialogue. This eventually led to the "incorporation of a national gender mainstreaming process with the inclusion of mainstreaming language in policy documents". The Caribbean Community and Common Market's (CARICOM) gender mainstreaming strategy would later become the basis for adopting a specific method for addressing "obstacles to gender equality and the empowerment of women in key sectors of the society".¹¹ National consultations ensued toward the development of a National Policy for Gender Equality.

In reference to the Caribbean region as a whole, serious weaknesses were uncovered in a study sponsored at that time by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) gender mainstreaming project. The concerns raised in this study were later addressed in a CARICOM follow-up meeting to Beijing that dealt with a more effective inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the work of the member States. Further analysis of the legislations in various countries of the region to prevent discrimination on the basis of sex, with regard to employment and access to goods and services revealed that although much had been accomplished in the achievement of gender equality in the region, much still needs to be done in order to meet the 2030 Millennium Goals.¹²

Likewise, on the international scene, the work to achieve gender equality moved from "Women in Development" to "Women and Development" and finally to "Gender and Development". The differences are succinctly captured thus: "The GAD approach examines the social construction and assignment of specific roles, responsibilities, and expectations of women and men. This approach, unlike WID and WAD, welcomes the potential contributions of men and women toward equity and social justice".¹³

As indicated by the above, generally in the Caribbean region and beyond, significant strides have been made in promoting the equality of women and men in society, at least on the level of civil policies and strategies. How these are implemented and received on a personal and social level have serious implications but, at least on a structural level, foundations are being laid to facilitate the personal and social transformation of society into one of greater equality, justice and consequently peace.

III. The Role of Caribbean Women in the Church

The impact of Vatican II on the Catholic Church in the Caribbean has been far reaching on several levels but, perhaps most significantly, in a more deliberate and focused option for the economically poor and those with special needs as is evidenced in the various parish ministries and expanded social services that have been introduced. The Document, *Justice and Peace in the New Caribbean*, published by the Antilles Episcopal Conference in 1975, was in line with the Medellin and Puebla Documents, and in accord with the vision of Vatican II, in addressing current social issues in the Caribbean context. This Document made it clear that the social services with which the Church in the Caribbean has long been involved was a

matter of justice not charity. The Caribbean Church's historical involvement in education took on even greater significance as it was seen as the primary way to the empowerment of people. Furthermore, the emphasis that Vatican II placed on the role of the laity in the Church opened the way for a more meaningful collaboration with the laity in institutions that were formerly administered only by priests and religious with the assistance of lay people. The number of schools, skills training centres, homes for the aged, the mentally and physically challenged, children and adults infected with HIV and AIDS, the homeless, pregnant teenagers and children in need of care have increased significantly. The decrease in the number of priests and religious has been compensated for by the ministration of the laity.¹⁴

In order to equip the laity for a more meaningful participation in the ministry of the Church, a laity formation/leadership programme was introduced at St. Michael's Theological Seminary (now College) in 1985. In addition, women were admitted to the degree programme in theology at St. Michael's as well as at the Regional Seminary in Trinidad.

In all of these services and institutions, it is to be noted that Caribbean women play a dominant role in terms of the number of women relative to men who are involved in the multiple ministries in the Church, not to mention the degree to which they outnumber men in the weekly attendance at Church services. It is obvious then that the Church's contribution to the development of Caribbean society and its own inner life relies heavily on the participation and work of women. It is to be noted, however, that there is a strong parallel in the status of Caribbean women in society and Caribbean women in the Church, who, while making a significant contribution to the development of society and the Church, are excluded from full and equal recognition and participation in key positions, particularly in the areas of leadership and decision-making.

In some respects it is quite remarkable that the Church, in almost two hundred years of Social Teaching, addressing issues of injustice and oppressive situations in society, has for the most part neglected to mention any special concern regarding women. However, this is somewhat understandable given the fact that in the basically patriarchal Western society, it is only recently that the plight of women has become a serious global issue.¹⁵

A brief overview of history of the Church's Social Teaching actually indicates that beyond the brief mention of women being wronged in dealing with the issue of the demand for just wages in *Quadragesimo Anno*, written by Pius XI in the post-depression year of 1931, no serious effort was made to deal with the concerns of women as a separate agenda until the U.S. Bishops' attempt to focus on it in a pastoral letter to women. In tracing the development of that document, Archbishop Pilarczyk indicated that explicit concern for women first appeared in John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* in which women were mentioned as being more conscious of their human dignity and, because of that, were demanding the rights of human persons, both in domestic and public life. That concern was reiterated in the Vatican II Document, *Gaudium et Spes*, which in reference to basic personal rights, condemned as evil discrimination based on "sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion" (GS, no. 29). The 1971 Synodal Document, *Justice and Peace in the World*, included a statement to the effect that women have "their own share and participation in the life of the community and likewise of the Church". This resulted in the formation of a committee to address the concerns of women but it was not until ten years later that a Pastoral Letter on women was drafted with the title, "One in Christ Jesus". In 1990 a second draft was drawn up and the final draft in June 1992. Unfortunately, however, the project was aborted and prompted Archbishop Pilarczyk to write this conclusion to his historical overview:

The Church has not always paid sufficient attention to women. Church practices have not always kept pace with Church pronouncements. This Pastoral Letter attempts to begin to take seriously those concerns and to address them. Not to do so would simply be another indication that women do not merit the attention of the Church....We run the risk of alienating women of deep faith and commitment, women whose devotion to the Church has been tested and proven, if they find that we have nothing to say to them.¹⁶

In the ten years that have elapsed since that time, some progress has been made, for example, in the acknowledgement of the “essential dignity and rights of women” as expressed in the Papal Message to “women throughout the world” in preparation for the Beijing Conference in 1994. In this Message, appreciation was also expressed for the contribution of women in all spheres of life, albeit with the “important roles” specified as “mothers, sisters, wives ... and co-workers in the apostolate ... daughters” as indicated in *Mulieris Dignitatem*, cf. n. 31, (15 August 1988). What should be noted, however, is the intent of the Message to register the concern “with a broader vision of the situation and problem of women in general in an attempt to promote the cause of women in the Church and in today’s world”.¹⁷ Recalling the experience of service rendered by outstanding women saints and mystics throughout the Church’s 2,000 years and other women “who were responsible for initiatives of extraordinary social importance”, the Pope stated that “[t]he life of the Church in the third millennium will certainly not be lacking in a new and surprising manifestation of the “feminine genius”.¹⁸

It must be admitted, however, that the Church has certainly not kept pace with the changes occurring in society to ensure the full empowerment of women. It is not surprising then that the restriction that women have encountered, and still do, in realizing their full potential in the Church, has become the main issue in the Caribbean Women’s theological reflections. In this way, they continue to struggle for the full development of all, women as well as men, who are equally made in the image and likeness of God and called to become one in Christ Jesus, regardless of race, sex, colour, class or religion, in accord with the vision of Vatican II. To this we now turn.

IV. Caribbean Women’s Theological Reflections

The writings of Caribbean women theologians reflect a broad cross current of influences and eclectically incorporate insights drawn from within the region and beyond. In line with the feminist discourse being developed in the region, it is liberationist in its method and structure and driven by the liberal quest for equality, justice and freedom from all oppressive structures, with a decided post-colonial stance and full awareness and endorsement of the more positive aspects of the present postmodern alternative vision, values and attitudes.

Feminist/womanist theology in the Caribbean developed as a specific variant of the theological enterprise that was initiated in the region in concert with the liberation movements that irrupted into the consciousness of the world, in conjunction with the liberal movements of the 1960s in the post-Enlightenment turn to the “victims of society”.¹⁹ Further developments in the 1970s in Latin America, particularly with the publication of Gustavo’s Gutierrez’s epochal *Liberation Theology*²⁰ and other Latin American publications, significantly influenced the development of Caribbean theology specifically in its adoption of the “dependency theory” when it became obvious that the development theories and strategies had failed to deliver the social and economic benefits that more developed countries already enjoyed. A causal link was made between the wealth of the developed countries and the poverty of the underdeveloped countries in a world structure that divided and classified nations as developed and underdeveloped, rich and poor, first and third world, however designated. The five hundred years of European and subsequently North American colonial occupation had effectively consigned the Caribbean countries to the latter groups.²¹

Caribbean theologian, Idris Hamid, captured well the basic problematic of the region and the resilient spirit that would drive the search for freedom in asserting that:

Imperialism of the spirit is the most final and fatal subjection any people could experience. Imperialism has done and is still doing its work among us. Yet, it has not completely conquered. The human spirit in the quest for wholeness bounces back in myriad ways. In the Caribbean, the search of the human spirit for freedom, wholeness and authenticity has expressed itself in various ways.²²

Emphasis was placed on the dehumanizing experience of slavery and the personal denigration that the majority of the black population of African descent endured with, as Hamid maintained, the complicity of the white European missionaries who identified Christianity with

civilizing. This emphasis was to remain a major focus as Caribbean theology further developed, as evidenced in three of the major publications that appeared at that time, viz.: *Decolonizing Theology* (1981), *Emancipation Still Comin'* 1982) and *Caribbean Theology* (1991).²³

Caribbean women's theological reflections will address most of the same issues with similar emphasis on the social and cultural impact of slavery, both personally and structurally but with attention to the experiences of women in particular. Accordingly, the term "womanist", as first used by African American women theologians, has also been employed as a "feminist" variant to more accurately specify their theology.²⁴ This is exemplified in the works of two of the foremost Roman Catholic Caribbean women theologians whose reflections on the role of women in society and the Church can be instructive.

The late Sister Diane Jagdeo, O.P., Ph.D., lectured on Systematic Theology at St. John Vianney Regional Roman Catholic Seminary in Trinidad from the late 1960s until her recent death in 2011. A very creative and socially conscious woman, Jagdeo's writings evidence familiarity with the classical Roman Catholic theological and religious traditions as well as the new vision opened up by Vatican II, along with a personal commitment to social engagement as the basis from which theological reflection follows as "a second step" as Gutierrez maintained.

In a lecture on "Women's Contribution in Transforming the Caribbean Church" that was delivered at a Theological Conference at St. Michael's Theological College in 2001, Jagdeo argued that women have always contributed to the development of the life of the Church, albeit in the silent "underworld of the Church". However, she noted the new agenda for women's engagement coming "... from this historical, cosmic moment when women have come to recognize that the role they play as church in society must be active, inclusive and effectively transformative, particularly of a Church and society that appear too predominantly male, patriarchal and exclusive".²⁵

In accord with Vatican II, she claimed that the Church, now undergoing transformation, reflects a "new way of perceiving church, not as a perfect society but as a 'pilgrim Church' journeying through the ambiguities and vagaries of history" and always in need of transformation. Hence she further affirmed, "[t]he agenda for the Caribbean Church today must be the transformation of society, of humanity. In undertaking this mission, it is imperative for women to play their part since what is at stake is the nurturing of human beings in the unknown depths and mystery of humankind's destiny".²⁶ She pointed out that it is, indeed, women's experience of being "unseen, unheard and unknown" in the underworld of the Church and the "suffering, rejection and ridicule" that they have endured that now makes it possible for them to "follow a deeper instinct, a deeper spiritual path, a different drive, a different voice and struggle to fulfill their desire to be responsible, dignified members of their churches".²⁷ Fully aware of the struggle to achieve that vision, she nonetheless remained undaunted.

Convinced of the inability of the one-sided vision of life to sustain the human spirit in this present moment of history, she called upon women to be alert to the "persistent, subtle and deeply institutionalized" attitudes of oppression that still dog the Church, contrary to the mutuality that is yet to be realized. The one-sided vision of Church is also evident in what she called "the experience of order without mystery" in the yearning for the permanence of greater order and stability as well as in the use of "words without wisdom", i.e., words used to discredit and denigrate women and dismiss their contribution without any constructive results.

More positively, Jagdeo proposed the reversal of the interpretation of two such "words", one, the image of "woman as homemaker" traditionally used to domesticate and cheapen the contribution of women and confining their work to the private sphere and excluding them from the public arena and decision-making bodies of the Church. Subversively, she interpreted "home", according to Thomas Moore's description of it, rather as a "sacred soulful understanding of space and environment".²⁸ Likewise she inverted the negative use of the image of "woman as enchantress" and interpreted it rather as capable of communicating the power of the "mystical attractiveness" of a God who "lures us constantly into being and

becoming". Thus she concluded, "enchantment lures us into the mystery of being" by evoking "presence", and enhancing "relationships".²⁹

In short, Jagdeo, through the use of stories and metaphors, employed an alternative way of doing theology that is not limited to the logic of reason and thus opens up to the deeper mystery of the human person and even more so of God who is indeed "incomprehensible mystery", according to Karl Rahner. She has also surfaced many of the key issues related to Caribbean women's experience in society and in the Church. She noted in particular the restriction of their roles and exclusion from key areas of authority and decision-making as well as the arduousness of their struggle to overcome the social biases and faulty reasoning traditionally used to keep them in their place. Nonetheless she saw the opportunity for women to draw from their experience of service, in spite of the restrictions and the suffering entailed, to plumb the depths of their spirituality in acknowledging their centredness in, and reliance on, God above all and allowing themselves to be drawn into mystical communion with the Triune God as their ultimate goal in life.

Anna Kasafi Perkins is another outstanding Caribbean woman theologian. A Jamaican national by birth, Perkins was educated at the University of the West Indies, Boston College, USA, and Cambridge University, England. Hence, Perkins' reflections on the role of Caribbean women in society and in the Church involves an eclectic use of sources, knowledge and insights drawn from academic and social experiences within the Caribbean region and beyond, even as she self-consciously includes insights related to the folk wisdom of her African ancestral heritage and its retentions in Caribbean society.³⁰ A post-Vatican II Christian, Perkins assumes its influence even beyond the Roman Catholic Church and engages in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, based upon the basic premise of the unity of history and the availability of God's saving grace to all humanity. Indeed, her major publication, *Justice as Equality*, argues that the strong influence of the vision of Vatican II and the Social Teaching of the Church is discernible in Michael Manley's attempt to transform Caribbean society, Jamaica in particular, in the 1970's through his Democratic Socialist political agenda.³¹

Specific to her reflections on the role of Caribbean women in the Church, Perkins' basic claim of justice as equality, will guide her interpretation of specific ethical issues currently impacting Caribbean women, such as HIV / AIDS and violence against women. She grounds the basis of this claim on the biblical revelation of men and women made in the image and likeness of God and on the Church's special insight into the nature of the human person. Catholic Tradition, she maintains, has emphasized the social nature of the person through the long tradition of its explicit use in the Social Teaching of the Church and, more recently, in *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), in which the responsibility of the laity in the transformation of society was strongly emphasized. Troubled by the distorted image of the human person that underlies the inequalities present in society, Perkins is convinced that the Church does understand "these problems" and that "endowed with light from God, she can offer solutions to them so that [humanity's] true situation can be portrayed and ... defects explained, while at the same time [human] dignity and destiny are justly acknowledged" (cf. no. 11f), as explained by the Bishops at Vatican II. Perkins therefore draws extensively from *Gaudium et Spes* to reiterate the link between the development of human beings and the advancement of society. Thus in the light of the Church's Social Teaching which makes it clear that "all social practices, institutions and systems are judged in terms of their implications for the full human person and all human persons", she suggests that one way in which the Church could contribute to the national reconstruction of the Caribbean region would be for policy-makers to take note of the impact their policies and prescriptions make. She concludes, however, that "the fullness of human possibilities will not be experienced in this life, and therefore cannot be identified with any social, economic, ecclesial or political structures".³²

On the premise that human flourishing is grounded in relationship to God, Perkins goes on to assert that a true understanding of human beings and the institutions created by them must take into account the "heights and depths of which human beings are capable while resolutely affirming the fact that human equality is the only basis for true human fellowship".³³ Making a distinction between theological articulation involving a relationship with God and

purely philosophical or social scientific interpretations of the human person, Perkins asserts, "This distinctly Christian perspective challenges articulations of human flourishing in which the individual self is made the centre of moral concern to the exclusion of concern for the well-being of others, where the self is conceived as the source of all meaning", and tends to treat others as only "material things".³⁴ Hence the individual and community must be held together in creative tension as overemphasis on either will have adverse effects in diminishing the total person.³⁵

The direct application of the above to the issue of women both in society and the Church will therefore entail the integral development of people through a balanced interaction of individuals and society, institutions and structures as well as the implementation of concrete strategies.

Not surprisingly, in accord with the above, Perkins' reflections on the contribution of women in the Church begins with the injustice meted out by restricting the woman's role and the exclusion of women from equal participation and access to such opportunities and benefits as are essential for the full flourishing of the person. Her critique of society centres on the lack of proper philosophical and moral grounding and thus the failure to understand the true nature of the human being as made in the image and likeness of God. Hence, the result is the formulation of theories and practices that run counter to full human and societal development. Her critique of the Church likewise focuses on the theological interpretations and practices that fall short of the Vatican II vision of the Church. She identifies in particular the fundamentalist use of Scripture and the inaccurate interpretation of the Catholic philosophical and doctrinal Tradition that have been used to justify the exclusion of women from full participation in the Church, particularly in the area of leadership and decision-making. Instead Perkins stresses the need for the inclusivity that characterizes the Catholic approach and the fostering of unity in diversity that respects and incorporates differences.³⁶

Practice based upon these principles would indeed position the Church for the realization of the integral development of people and society that she envisions through the inclusion of the personal, cultural, social and religious perspectives of women and the nurturing of human and spiritual values, honed whether by nature or by grace. In a similar fashion, practice based on these principles will position the Church in a more open and constructive dialogue with the diversity of cultures, societies and religions that now mark the postmodern world.

Perkins, therefore, calls upon the Church "to embrace its Trinitarian form in the 'plurality of the world' in which Caribbean society is but a microcosm while incorporating more fully the often-ignored world of women".³⁷ It is important, she maintains, that the Church heed this call which indeed "reverberates in the voices of Caribbean women as they *talk back*" [emphasis mine], using a phrase that describes a typical Afro-Caribbean women's way of expressing the resistance that women slaves engaged in, in the struggle against their enslavement, at times different but no less effective than the strategies of their male counterparts. In the words of Lucille Mair,

Women, by refusing to accept slavery like dumb animals, by regularly raising their voices, have in their way forced their presence on the consciousness of many. This was the thin end of the wedge in undermining the system of slavery, for once the slave is seen or heard as a human being, it becomes difficult to justify his or her existence as a chattel".³⁸

Continuing to use the phrase "talk back", also to imply an "invitation to conversation" Perkins notes the deep "resonances" that the notion has for a "Trinitarian vision of World Church". This would certainly open up the space for the dialogue that is necessary if the Church is to continue its mission in this plural postmodern world.³⁹

In sum, Perkins highlights the biblical and philosophical basis on which the equality of all persons is grounded and the moral imperative that arises from the Social Teaching of the Church. Thus every person, regardless of specific differences, is in justice to have equal access

to opportunities for holistic self-development and allowed full participation in all areas of life in society and in the Church, in accord with each one's God-given gifts and training. She argues that failure to do so, as pertains to women and, indeed, to all marginalized groups, is due to the lack of understanding of the true nature of the human person as equally made in the image and likeness of God. Hence, she challenges the Church to draw from the depths of her own Tradition in order to bring the vision and intention of Vatican II to a new and renewing day in inclusive and transforming Trinitarian ecclesial practice.

Implications of a Trinitarian Model of Church

Both Perkins and Jagdeo's reflections point to the need to come to grips with the implications of faith in the Trinitarian nature of God in order to arrive at a better understanding of the Church and a more appropriate praxis for future development and effective mission.

Trinitarian theology has developed significantly in recent years and particularly so in Europe and North America as reflected particularly in the works of Catherine La Cugna, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Elizabeth Johnson, among others.⁴⁰ More in accord with the Eastern theological Tradition, the emphasis is placed on the co-equality of the three persons, the unity in diversity and the intra-penetration and dynamic interpersonal relationships as captured by the Greek word "perichoresis". Based upon such principles, these theologians also argue for the freeing of women from such obstacles as would limit the full flourishing of their God-given potential and their full participation in the Church in order to engage in a "discipleship of equals".

More recently, Gerard Mannion, proposed a Trinitarian ecclesiological model of Church as the one that would best respond to the contemporary issues of fragmentation and divisions that run counter to the more positive postmodern affirmation of cultural diversity in all its expressions, and the inclusivity necessary for the dignity of, and respect for, the other. Exclusivity and the imposition of one vision of the Church, he contends, will not be true to the Tradition of the Church and will not foster the alternative vision that the Church, in truly following Jesus Christ, is equipped to make.⁴¹

It seems, therefore, that to endorse such a Trinitarian "way" of being Church, and to further explore its implications for Christian praxis, would more effectively address not only the exclusion of women but of all disenfranchised groups struggling for justice and equality. This would indeed make the "option for the poor" more broadly applicable and more capable of capturing the very character of Jesus of Nazareth who revealed the nature and activity of God precisely as the kenotic outpouring of compassionate, unconditional love for "the other" in the abiding presence of the Spirit.

V1. Towards a More Adequate Ecclesial Praxis

As we have seen from the above, the advancement of women in society has made significant strides since the inception of the women's advocacy for greater gender equality and justice. However, there is still a gap between the policies that have been put in place and the implementation of those policies. In relation to society, the situation of women in the Church compared to that of men shows the same level of discrepancy between women's contribution with respect to their education, ability and performance on the one hand, and the social recognition, economic compensation and upward mobility into positions of authority and decision-making, on the other.

The Caribbean women's critique of the Church also parallels the feminist discourse in taking a liberal, post-colonial approach that is relevant to the Caribbean experience as well as to the global postmodern world. The main concern is to ensure the adoption of the practice that will implement the vision of Vatican II, particularly in the basic affirmation of the unity of history breaking down the dichotomy of the sacred and the secular, the rootedness of human life in God and the sacramental presence of God in the Church and in the world, as revealed in Jesus Christ and the continued work of the Spirit. Implied in this is a Trinitarian vision of Church, which models unity in diversity, interdependence and interrelationship, that flows from and

nurtures communion and inclusivity of all, regardless of race, colour, gender, class and religion. In this way, women will flourish by being able to realize their full potential and so truly experience a real “home” in the Church and rebirth in the Spirit of God through a closer following of Jesus of Nazareth.

The task before us then is for the Church to develop strategies that will move forward the vision and agenda of Vatican II, specifically in relationship to the role that women, especially Caribbean women, are equipped to assume in the implementation of that vision. Not to allow women their role in implementing the vision of Vatican II will continue to make that vision a dream. However, even as we move to en flesh the vision of Vatican II more fully, the continued challenge may be addressed through:

- ensuring that policies are formulated with gender equality in mind in addressing issues in the society and the Church;
- allowing women equal access to opportunities for personal advancement in the Church in accord with their God-given gifts and training;
- allowing women fuller access to, and participation in, positions of authority and decision-making groups and events;
- including in the Church’s “Option for the Poor” a specific reference to women, especially where preferential treatment has been biased towards men;
- encouraging the adoption of the alternative vision that includes the positive values of post-modernity as a deliberate strategy to achieve Vatican II’s vision and the objective of transforming people and society through a true rebirth of the Church and its mission;
- and finally, promoting dialogue with, and among, different peoples and religions in order to achieve the desired unity of all in Christ Jesus.

In conclusion, in moving forward, it might very well be instructive and encouraging for Caribbean women to learn from their experience of Church and society, as Delores Williams did from the experience of Black women, that:

The greatest truth ... of [their] survival and quality-of-life struggle is that they have worked without hesitation and with all the energy they could muster. Many of them like Hagar, have demonstrated great courage as they resisted oppression and as they went into the wide, wide world to make a living for themselves and their children. They depended upon their own strength and upon each other. But in the final analysis the message is clear: they trusted the end to God.⁴²

END -NOTES

¹ Donna Markham, “Befriending the Dragon”, Lecture delivered at LCWR Conference, Spokane, Washington, 1990.

² Diane Jagdeo, ‘Women’s Role in Transforming Caribbean Society’, at 28f. in *Groundings* 9 (2002) 27-39.

³ Theresa Lowe Ching, “The Role of Women in the Caribbean Society”, at 18 in *Groundings* 8 (2002), 16-23.

⁴ See Theresa Lowe Ching, “The Mission of the Church in a Multicultural Context: Focus on Jamaica” in *Groundings*, 21 (2009) 30-42; Rex Nettleford, “The Caribbean: Crossroads of the Americas” in Allan Cobley, ed., *Crossroads of Empire: The Europe-Caribbean Connection 1492-1992* (Barbados: Stephenson’s Lithopress Ltd, 1994) 1-14.

⁵ Kortright Davis, *Emancipation Still Comin’: Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1990) 29-39. See also, George Beckford, *Persistent Poverty* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

⁶ Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* (New York: Crossroad, 1991) 21-22.

⁷ Gregory Baum, *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview* (New York: Orbis Books, 1999).

⁸ Aldrie Henry-Lee, “Desk Review: The Status of Men and Women in Jamaica”, Paper submitted to the Jamaica Advisory Committee, University of the West Indies, Mona, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (2005), 13.

⁹ Joycelyn Massiah Mair, “On the Brink of the New Millennium: Are Caribbean Women Prepared?”. The 1998 Inaugural Lucille Mathurin Mair Lecture, University of the West Indies, Mona, Centre for Gender and Development Studies (1998).

¹⁰ Organizations in AWOJA include: The Women's Centre, Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaican Women's Political Caucus, Women's Media Watch, FamPlan Jamaica, among others.

¹¹ Henry-Lee, "Desk Review", 9. Gender mainstreaming is defined in this Report as "a process of assessing the implications of any planned action for women and men (girls and boys): it involves the (re)organization, development and evaluation of policy processes so that a gender perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making and programming", 99. Cf. "National Policy for Gender Equality" (NPGE), developed by the Bureau of Women's Affairs (Gender Affairs), Kingston, Jamaica and the Gender Advisory Committee.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁴ Prominent among these are the Institutions owned and administered by the Missionary Brothers of the Poor, Mustard Seed Communities, Laws Street Trade Training Centre, St. Patrick Foundation, Alpha Boys School and St. John Bosco Children's Home. All offer both direct service to the poor as well as education for empowerment. In addition, Food for the Poor Foundation, initiated in Jamaica, has become a world wide organization accessing and distributing significant funding and donations to numerous Churches and NGO's in direct service of the indigent.

¹⁵ Cf. Peggy Antrobus, *The Global Women's Movement: Origins, Issues and Strategies* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004); Heyward Carter, *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation* (Washington, D.C: University Press of America, 1973); Maria Pilar Aquino, *Our Cry for Life* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993); Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness* (New York: Orbis Books, 2000).

¹⁶ Lowe Ching, *Groundings* 8, 20.

¹⁷ "Papal Letter Prepares for Beijing Conference", <http://forums.catholic.com/showthread.php?t=299506> Papal Encyclicals.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹ See Matthew Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 28-60.

²⁰ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1973); Leonardo Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator* (New York: Orbis, 1979); Juan Luis Segundo, *Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*, 5 Vols. (New York: Orbis Books 1973-1984); Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads* (New York: Orbis Books, 1978); etc.

²¹ It is to be noted here that the theory of dependency had already had a long history of development in the Caribbean as discussed by George Beckford in *Persistent Poverty* (1972).

²² Idris Hamid, ed., *Out of the Depths* (San Fernando, Trinidad: Bahaman Printing Press, 1977) 6.

²³ Noel Leo Erskine, *Decolonizing Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1981; Kortright Davis, *Emancipation Still Comin'*; Lewin Williams, *Caribbean Theology* (New York/ Washington, D.C./San Francisco: Peter Lang, 1994).

²⁴ Marjorie Lewis, United Church Theologian, uses the name of a Jamaican National heroine, Nanny of the Maroons to speak of a "Nannyish Theology" in order to highlight the courage, passion and endurance of women engaged along with men in resisting slavery. See "Womanist Theology in the Caribbean" in Judith Soares, ed., *Theologising Women* (Barbados: WAND, 2007) 34-50.

²⁵ Jagdeo, in *Groundings* 9, 27.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 37f.

³⁰ See Theresa Lowe Ching, "A Liberationist Spirituality in the Caribbean Context" in Philip L. Wickeri, ed., *The People of God Among All God's Peoples: Frontiers in Christian Mission*, (Hong Kong: Clear-Cut Publishing and Printing Co., 2000) 145-175, for fuller discussion of African Religions and retentions in the Caribbean.

³¹ Anna Kasafi Perkins, *Justice As Equality: Michael Manley's Caribbean Vision of Justice* (New York: Peter Lang, Inc., 2010).

³² Anna Kasafi Perkins, "The Church Taking Responsibility for Caribbean Realities", a Talk given at the 155th General Assembly of the Jamaica Baptist Union, February 25, 2005, 13f. Here I would like to suggest that what Perkins indicates in speaking of national reconstruction has a direct parallel to the renewal of the Church and its mission that is the main concern of Vatican II. Likewise, the understanding of the human person that she draws from her review of the Social Teaching of the Church equally applies to women and must be taken into account when speaking of women in the Church.

³³ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Anna Kasafi Perkins, "En/gendering a Trinitarian Church as a Plural Society: A Jamaican Reflection". Catholic Theology in the Caribbean Today, Tenth Annual Conference, Paramaribo, Suriname, 7 May 2005, 9f.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 12, quoting Jean Besson, "Reputation and Respectability Reconsidered: A New Perspective on Afro-Caribbean Peasant Women", 29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

⁴⁰ Catherine Mowry LaCugna, ed., *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in a Feminist Perspective* (New York: HarperCollins Inc., 1993); Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992). Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Reconstruction of Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1988).

⁴¹ Gerard Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2007).

⁴² Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, 238f.

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ArulMary Durairaj, FMM

MI EXPERIENCIA MISIONERA DE MUJER TRABAJANDO CON MUJERES



Al hablar de las mujeres y de su rol en la Iglesia y en la sociedad, quiero compartir mi experiencia en tanto que misionera religiosa, oriunda de India, enviada en misión a América Latina, más específicamente a Bolivia y a Chile. Mi experiencia en Bolivia, trabajando con mujeres aborígenes llamadas “Aymara” me abrió un nuevo mundo, un mundo totalmente diferente del que estaba acostumbrada a ver y a experimentar. Mi primera misión en la ciudad de “El Alto de la Paz” requirió mucho de mí, en lo que concierne mi salud. Vivir a una altitud de

4.300 metros no fue una empresa fácil. Y además de la altitud, vivir durante todo el año en un frío que penetra hasta los huesos fue un desafío a mi vocación misionera. Pero, así como el Señor respondió a San Pablo en medio de sus aflicciones, también yo escuche la voz del Señor que me decía: **“TE BASTA MI GRACIA.”** (2Cor. 12,9) Esta voz reconfortante de Dios fue mi fuerza durante mi misión.

Para mi, trabajar en la promoción de las mujeres significa empoderar a las mujeres, ayudarlas a que puedan mantenerse en pie. Las mujeres son fuertes cuando tienen la capacidad de ser económicamente productivas e independientes. Por ello, entrenar a las mujeres para que puedan, por sus propios medios, ser financieramente auto-dependientes, es la mejor manera de inspirarlas y ayudarlas. Hemos trabajado para proveer a las mujeres, a través de talleres, las habilidades técnicas necesarias para adquirir una profesión que les permita sostenerse a lo largo de sus vidas. Además, les ofrecimos cursos de alfabetización bilingües para que puedan continuar a caminar hacia su crecimiento. Simultáneamente les ofrecimos varios tipos de talleres para el desarrollo de habilidades básicas.

Durante el día, dichas mujeres realizaban diferentes trabajos fuera del hogar y a las siete de la noche llegaban para recibir sus cursos de alfabetización, muchas veces acarreando sus niños más chicos atados a sus espaldas, como es tradición en esta cultura. Teníamos un sistema de educación para adultos, por el cual al cabo de seis meses, podían realizar exámenes y pasar de curso. Les entregábamos certificados, y siempre experimenté una gran satisfacción al ver el gozo que irradiaba en sus rostros. Cuando pasaban de curso, uno podía realmente ver el fruto de sus esfuerzos. Los resultados se multiplicaron, ya que las mujeres que se graduaron se convirtieron en maestras de los cursos más básicos.

Aquellas que se formaban en los cursos técnicos, por lo general trabajaban a tiempo parcial. Generalmente llegaban a la tarde para el entrenamiento, y algunas venían a las clases nocturnas. Se trataba de mujeres, en su mayoría amas de casa, que decidieron con fe en ellas mismas andar este camino de la formación técnica. El frío y la lluvia no las asustaban. Nada las detenía. Hubo mujeres que han tenido que enfrentar a sus maridos, quienes son totalmente machistas e intentaban a menudo impedir que sus esposas reciban entrenamiento

y educación, para mantenerlas sumisas. Pero estas mujeres sabían bien lo que querían. Algunas mujeres incluso han sufrido abuso físico por parte de sus esposos por el hecho de haber participado en el entrenamiento. Pero, con sus espíritus guerreros, ellas enfrentaron estas situaciones y siguieron adelante. Al llegar fin de año, recibir el diploma fue un enorme gozo para cada una de ellas porque significaba el objetivo logrado. Se trata de mujeres decididas y listas a enfrentar obstáculos tanto dentro como fuera de sus hogares. Listas también a enfrentar dificultades económicas con tal de adquirir los materiales necesarios para estudiar. Lucharon para lograr este objetivo. Gandhi dijo oportunamente: **“Llamar a las mujeres el sexo débil es una calumnia; más aún: es una injusticia de los hombres hacia las mujeres.”**

Caminando por las calles, encontré varias antiguas alumnas que me decían: “Hermana, ahora tengo mi propio taller, soy ahora una micro-emprendedora, estoy empleando a otras alumnas del Centro Técnico.” Otras me contaban que tenían trabajos seguros que les permitían crear un futuro mejor para sus familias. Estos son los frutos que recogemos después de años de trabajo en el campo de la promoción de las mujeres. He aprendido que, al trabajar con nuestros hermanos y hermanas más necesitados, solo tenemos que donarnos a nosotras mismas y dejar que el Señor haga el resto. **Cuando uno trabaja para la promoción de las mujeres, no solo ellas, sino también sus familias son promovidas, y cuando la familia es promovida, la sociedad toda es promovida; Y es esto lo que he experimentado.**

Durante la segunda parte de mi experiencia misionera, he vivido en Chile con mujeres inmigrantes. Chile es un país relativamente estable políticamente en comparación con las naciones vecinas, y sus políticas migratorias son bastante abarcadoras, a pesar de que aún dejan un poco que desear. Tales condiciones en dicho país, atrae muchos inmigrantes de América Latina que eligen a Chile como destino. Durante los ocho años que llevo en Chile, he tenido la oportunidad de recibir, acompañar y asistir a mujeres provenientes de Perú, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brasil, Colombia, Paraguay, República Dominicana y Haití. He trabajado para ayudarlas a integrarse a la cultura chilena y a inserirse en el mercado laboral.

He conocido mujeres que han escapado situaciones de violencia doméstica; otras partieron desesperadas y sobrepasadas por deudas financieras en su país de origen; otras angustiadas por la enfermedad de un hijo o de un miembro de la familia; algunas oprimidas por la pobreza que les ha impedido ofrecer una vida digna y una educación a sus hijos. La mayoría son madres solteras, que llevan solas la carga de la familia. Son mujeres valientes que deciden atravesar fronteras, muchas sin siquiera saber donde van o con quienes se encontrarán. Mujeres con una enorme fuerza interior y que, movidas por el amor que tienen por sus hijos o por sus padres, se enfrentan a un mundo desconocido. Lo que escucho de la boca de muchas de ellas es dramático: la separación y el sacrificio de dejar a sus hijos para asegurarles una vida mejor es a veces paradójico, ya que los años de ausencia generan una distancia. Muchas veces, cuando vuelven a ver a sus hijos después de varios años, éstos las ignoran, muchas veces sin siquiera llamarlas “mamá” ya que es el nombre que dan a sus abuelas, bajo cuyo cuidado generalmente han quedado. Este es un enorme sufrimiento para estas madres; por lo que estas historias van acompañadas de lágrimas. Escuchar estas historias y poder compartir con cada una de estas mujeres me inspira a descubrir la fe profunda que las anima y a ver como continúan escribiendo sus propias historias de salvación. Ellas me ayudan a mantener mi propia fe y continúan evangelizándose.

En el Centro de Asistencia al Inmigrante (CIAMI) donde trabajo, estas mujeres reciben abrigo, comida, preparación para integrarse a la cultura chilena a través de talleres, y ayuda para encontrar trabajos. Se trata de un espacio de integración para inmigrantes. Y así como

ellas deciden dejar sus hogares y sus patrias para buscar nuevos horizontes, así también las mujeres chilenas de clase socio-económicas altas dejan sus hogares para ir a trabajar. Por ello, estas familias chilenas necesitan empleadas para cuidar a los niños y hacer las tareas domésticas. En el Centro intentamos facilitar el encuentro entre las familias chilenas que necesitan empleadas domésticas y las mujeres inmigrantes que necesitan trabajos.

En este ámbito de trabajo, hay mucha discriminación, injusticia, maltrato de todo tipo y marginalización. Mi trabajo consiste en encontrar puestos de empleadas domésticas para mujeres inmigrantes; asegurarme de que son tratadas bien, de manera justa y respetuosa de su dignidad humana; y asegurarme de que las leyes laborales sean obedecidas. A pesar de los esfuerzos constantes para lograr los objetivos mencionados, siempre hay situaciones que van más allá de mi control. Muchas veces tengo que hablar con familias muy ricas para ayudarlos a darse cuenta de sus actitudes discriminatorias y humillantes hacia las inmigrantes, ayudando a estas familias a abrir sus corazones y reconocer su pobreza espiritual en medio de su riqueza material.

En una ocasión, una empleadora chilena me dijo que ella quería una trabajadora doméstica, pero no quería una “negra”. Le contesté: “En ese caso, usted vino al lugar equivocado.” Ella me preguntó por qué le estaba diciendo eso. Le dije: “porque usted está en una casa de inmigrantes que recibe a todos sin distinción de raza, color o religión; es una casa que pertenece a la Iglesia Católica. No voy a permitirle que repita una vez más lo que acaba de decir. Por favor retírese porque esta casa no le va a proveer ningún servicio, si usted no cambia de actitud.” Pero tanto su mente como su corazón estaban cerrados, por lo que partió sin una empleada doméstica.

En otra ocasión, otra empleadora me dijo que no quería una “niñera negra” para cuidar a sus hijos debido a que a sus niños de dos o tres años no les gustaría y podrían ser impresionados por el color de su piel. Le respondí: “Si usted no les proporciona la oportunidad de encontrarse y compartir con gente de color, sus niños nunca van a aprender. No son los niños los que tienen un problema, es usted la que discrimina; Ellos son inocentes y aprenderían fácilmente a estar abiertos a amar a todo el mundo. Después de unos minutos de silencio, ella aceptó que una joven mujer dominicana vaya a cuidar a sus niños. Unos meses más tarde, dicha empleadora regresó muy contenta para agradecerme y contarme cuan positiva su experiencia había sido. Este año estoy trabajando en un proyecto para humanizar las relaciones entre empleadores y empleadas domésticas. Es una tarea sin fin la de ayudar a construir la comprensión en un mundo de mentes cerradas, a fin de que las personas se abran y acojan lo que es diferente y nuevo.

Siendo mujeres, somos tejedoras de relaciones sociales, buscando siempre nuevos caminos hacia la construcción de redes de asistencia mutua. Muchas veces he sentido la vocación de ser una vasija receptiva de todo tipo de experiencias. Cuando las inmigrantes vienen a compartirme sus experiencias de sufrimientos y maltratos, lo que necesitan es un oído atento y un corazón que las escuche, que las comprenda, que imparta empatía cual bálsamo que cura las heridas interiores causadas por la humillación, y que las acepte en los momentos en que sufren de baja autoestima. Ellas persisten en la lucha; lo intentan una y otra vez hasta lograr su objetivo.

Cuando vuelvo a casa y me siento a rezar, miro al crucifijo y pregunto, “Señor, ¿cuántas veces más continuará la humanidad a crucificarte? ¿Hasta cuando continuará esto, Señor? ¿Por cuanto tiempo?” Sentada frente al Santísimo Sacramento, por mi mente pasa como una película hecha de rostros marcados por la necesidad, por la aflicción, y desde mi

corazón los ofrezco al Señor en mis oraciones. Cada mañana cuando me levanto para ir a trabajar, le digo al Señor: “Señor, dame un corazón compasivo, y coloca en mi boca las palabras apropiadas que puedan consolar a mi prójimo que esta solo y sin abrigo.” De esta manera continúo viviendo la oración Eucarística durante el día. Quiero reconocer y apreciar el apoyo y el interés de mis hermanas de comunidad a través de todos estos años de mi vida misionera en América Latina. En este trabajo de acompañar a las personas que sufren, hay un gran desgaste emocional. El apoyo de mi comunidad, que me ha proporcionado un lugar de descarga y de apoyo ha sido muy importante. Sin ello, mi trabajo no hubiera sido posible. En tanto que religiosa, mi comunidad siempre me ha acompañado y ha dado vida a mi labor misionera.

También me llena de felicidad cuando algunas de las inmigrantes vienen y me dicen: “Hermana, vengo a despedirme y a agradecerle porque he ahorrado el dinero que necesitaba para abrir un pequeño negocio en mi país, y me estoy volviendo ahora para realizar aquello que siempre he soñado hacer.” Otras vienen y dicen: “Me vuelvo a mi país, pues ya he logrado que todos mis hijos se vuelvan profesionales; He logrado mi objetivo de proporcionarles una educación y vuelvo a casa feliz.” Algunas dicen: “I ahorrado el dinero que necesitaba para poder estudiar en la universidad, así que me vuelvo a estudiar aquello que siempre quise estudiar.” Y otras dicen: “Me vuelvo a mi país porque ya he terminado de construir mi casa, y éste era mi objetivo.”

Es muy bonito trabajar con mujeres que me inspiran, que me dan fuerzas, y que me enseñan a luchar para construir una sociedad más justa y humana, aportando mi pequeño granito de arena. Sin la fuerza de Dios, no soy capaz de nada. Estoy muy segura de que es Dios quien hace el trabajo. Por esta razón, le agradezco y lo adoro a EL por mi vocación misionera y por mi vocación de Misionera Franciscana de María.

Quisiera concluir esta oportunidad de compartir mi trabajo con las palabras de nuestra fundadora, la Beata María de la Pasión: **“Mi nación es el mundo entero” y “Hay tanto bien por hacer en el mundo.... Como me gustaría tener mil vidas.”**

Gracias.



OPEN FORUM: 12 May 2012

A. Recommendations on how to improve the SEDOS Seminars

1. The meeting was very important: we now need to collect the results of all that we discussed and put them into practice in light of the future.
2. SEDOS succeeded in raising awareness of its presence and the different themes which emanated there- from,
 - a) but this is not enough. In view of celebrating the 50th anniversary, we must take concrete action in Rome, Italy, which should include all the member Congregations. There must also be a commitment in terms of specific roles that the congregations will need to play in this project.
 - b) The focus and objective of this concrete action must be: to help in the permanent formation of candidates for mission. In this joint endeavor we must try to answer the following question: how can we provide concrete and helpful follow-ups to the presentations and shared experiences SEDOS offers.
3. SEDOS needs to reach out and extend its purposeful outlook and fruit to other missions: Sister Martha, RNDM.
4. There is a need to help Congregations to carry out mission in terms of the SEE-JUDGE and ACT methodology
 - a) Can we find new ways of being present and 'seeing' the new realities in our mission work?
 - b) How do we make a comprehensive social analysis of our missions?
 - c) Could we come up with specific proposals for action, in the light of what we have seen and analyzed, to present to the Union of Superiors General for specific action?
5. We need to review the different themes that have been discussed over the past 50 years.
 - We need to write and publish a feature article on SEDOS in the Catholic papers/magazines in the countries that we come from.
6. We need to respond to this question: How can we as SEDOS accompany the emerging Congregations with Missiological insights for formation and evangelization?
Nicanor, OMI, Peru
7. There is a need to bring on board local congregations and the diocesans (who are also missionaries). We need to think how we can help them from a missiological standpoint.
8. SEDOS' objective is to promote the mission *Ad gentes*. Therefore there is a need to refocus on the new missiological realities brought by new phenomena, such as migration.
Gaitano Massolini, Consolata Missionaries.
9. How do we bring the perception and sharing of SEDOS to our universities, in order to refresh their style of thinking and reflection on the newly emerging realities?
10. There is a need to give more space to the laity.
11. SEDOS could produce more documents and have them effectively and broadly distributed so as to be better known.
12. The focus of the next Seminar should be on the "New Evangelization".
13. SEDOS holds an Annual General Assembly. This meeting offers an opportunity for more in-put on how we can improve SEDOS. The next Annual General Assembly will be held on the 4th December. Members are kindly requested to be sure to stay after the first talk on that day, so that they can make suggestions on how to improve SEDOS' activities.
14. We must continue to integrate the new voices from the margins into the mainstream thinking. SEDOS is doing great things in this regard.

15. We need to think about how we can improve our *formation programmes*. Maybe by making sure the documents from SEDOS Seminars reach the Formation Houses?
16. Given that SEDOS provides a space for dialogue with the new/emerging Missiological trends, there is a need to create a space for the institutional Church to take part in Missiological dialogues and exchanges so that she too can listen and hear the voices from the grassroots.
17. For the 50th anniversary celebration, could we also invite some people whose work has been influenced by SEDOS Seminars as a symbol of the fruitfulness of SEDOS Seminars?
18. The dialogical space created by SEDOS could be further enriched by extending our initiation to other major faith groups. Thus, SEDOS Seminars need to have:-
 - a) An Ecumenical face
 - b) An Inter-Religious face
19. The processes that we use at present to discern and get in touch with the new trends emerging in our missions are too slow. We need to be more sensitive to the emerging trends in order to create a methodology and process that would help us to accelerate our reading and interpretation of the new signs of the times.

FORUM ABIERTO

8-12 mayo 2012

B. Sugerencias para SEDOS

Prima Parte

1. Que SEDOS pueda contribuir a la formación misionera de las nacientes congregaciones indígenas de América Latina y de aquellas que están emergiendo en contextos asiáticos y africanos.
2. SEDOS ha contribuido mucho en la comprensión de la misión. Ahora debería promover otros proyectos concretos como la INTERCONGREGACIONALIDAD a fin de dar respuestas a situaciones misioneras específicas que reclaman una colaboración conjunta y solidaria en recursos humanos y materiales.
3. SEDOS necesita ser promovido en los cinco continentes y dar a conocer su propuesta y los servicios que puede ofrecer a las congregaciones, especialmente en el análisis de la realidad y de las nuevas situaciones que hoy día reclaman una mayor comprensión interdisciplinar de la misión.
4. SEDOS debería estudiar y hacer propuestas concretas de proyectos misioneros inter-congregacionales, en diálogo con la Unión de Superiores Mayores y con instancias de organizaciones locales de la Vida religiosa.
5. En este mismo tema, SEDOS puede ver las condiciones de posibilidad que existen hoy en la Vida religiosa para estos proyectos inter-congregacionales; qué pasos ya se están dando en esta dirección; qué proyectos se están realizando, a fin de dar pasos hacia una Vida Religiosa, vivida como una gran Comunidad de Comunidades.
6. SEDOS podría organizar programas formativos a fin de ayudar a las congregaciones diocesanas que envían misioneros a otros países y continentes.
7. En sus 50 años SEDOS podría hacer una recopilación de todas las publicaciones que ha realizado, como memoria histórica de su misión.
8. SEDOS en su servicio de animación y de profundización de la comprensión de la misión y particularmente de la Misión Ad Gentes, puede también ayudar a “oxigenar” la teología de los estudiantes de las congregaciones que se forman en Roma en diversas Universidades.
9. SEDOS se ha concentrado más en las Congregaciones religiosas, es hora de incorporar también a los laicos y laicas.
10. Que SEDOS ofrezca también contribuciones a fin de ayudar a una mayor profundización del tema de la Nueva Evangelización.
11. Para los 50 años de SEDOS podría invitar a algunos obispos donde las Congregaciones misioneras están presentes.
12. En este mismo tema del aniversario de SEDOS sería interesante recoger los testimonios de personas y de congregaciones que se han sentido ayudados por la contribución de SEDOS.
13. SEDOS debe mantener su condición de ser UNA ALTERNATIVA en la Iglesia en lo que a la vida y la formación misionera de la Vida Religiosa se refiere. Por este motivo, para celebrar sus 50 años, podría organizar un Seminario Misionológico abierto al ecumenismo, al diálogo interreligioso y otras propuestas emergentes hoy en la sociedad.
14. SEDOS, mirando hacia el futuro, debe abrirse a otros espacios interreligiosos; conectar con las nuevas sensibilidades y de los nuevos caminos de los pueblos y sociedades. Por ejemplo, hoy está presente el desafío de abrirse a otros caminos espirituales de otras religiones.

Secunda Parte:

Algunos aspectos de evaluación del Seminario

1. Creatividad, libertad e inclusión en las celebraciones del Seminario (lo femenino, el sacerdocio, los signos, etc.)

2. Las posibilidades de contacto y de diálogo que hubo, especialmente con participantes de América Latina.
3. Se manifestaron muchos signos de esperanzas para la Iglesia y para la Vida Religiosa.
4. La dinámica del Seminario ayudó mucho a que se produjera un ambiente de mucha convivencia y encuentro.
5. Estas experiencias de cercanía posibilitó a que muchas personas que no conocían la realidad de América Latina y la consideraban un continente lejano, tuvieran la oportunidad de dialogar y de crear vínculos.
6. Se sugiere que los tiempos sean usados se forma diferente. Que se deje mayor espacio a los tiempos personales de reflexión.

CLOSING MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT

Good morning once again, to each of you!

It is hard for me to believe how quickly the time has passed since we gathered here on Tuesday afternoon. When I welcomed you at that time, I said that we came together in our common experience of being disciples of Christ Jesus. It was my hope then that, as we moved through these days, we would grow together as a community of faith, and also as a learning community and as a discerning community.

I noted that we were here to listen and to learn from presentations that would expand our horizons – to be stretched to think beyond that which we already knew. At the same time, we were also here to share from the depths of our own rich experience, which would then contribute to the conversation and to the eventual fruit of our work at this conference. Ours was to be an engagement of mutuality. And, from my own personal experience and from what many of you have shared with me, this is precisely what took place in these three and a half days.

Growing together as a faith community:

It is true that we profess the same faith but, growing into a faith community requires more than a profession. It requires openness to the action of the Holy Spirit moving among us and gently expanding our hearts to engage wholeheartedly in the process. This has been evident in our willingness to welcome the “other” and to share ourselves with those we were meeting for the first time so as to be welcomed as the “other”. It has been evident in the quality of our prayer, in our use of symbols and ritual to engage in the mystery of God in everyday life, in our willingness to journey together on pilgrimage, in our times of pondering and sharing on the Word of God, in our celebrations of Eucharist, and in our openness to share our talents with simplicity and joy – delighting in each other and experiencing the delight that God takes in us. All of us have made new acquaintances and some seeds of new friendships have been planted in this short time. Yes, I believe that we have grown as a faith community.

Growing together as a learning community:

It was evident from the first afternoon that we were ready to learn and grow. From the moment that Fr. Luis Alberto Nahuelanca gave us the marvelous roadmap, the panoramic overview of the journey from Medellin to Aparecida to assist us to enter into the topic of the Conference, we were clearly ready to ask the question: *Vatican II – Springtime of the Poor? (for the laity? for the indigenous peoples? for women?)*. Our openness to ongoing learning was evident in the attention that we gave to each presenter, in our awareness of the importance of the rich message that we heard from them, and in our appreciation for the gift of God that these women and men were for us this week. They have challenged us and stretched us in many more ways than I can recount here. Our growth as a learning community was evident in the active engagement of each person in small group discussions and in our desire to continue the dialogue during conversations at meals, during coffee breaks and walking breaks ... all of which contributed to our ongoing learning.

Growing as a discerning community:

I believe there is some evidence for this as well. As individuals, we entered into this SEDOS conference with open hearts, allowing the Spirit to lead us gently into this process. We listened to presentations; we read and re-read them and reflected on them during our personal quiet time. In our discussions, we shared openly about the ways in which we have personally been challenged during these days. Together we raised questions as to how our respective charisms [as lived by our sisters and brothers] have been and still are responding to some of the challenges that were identified during this conference. At the same time, we recognized the truth that we are being called to go beyond the *comfort zones* we may have created to discover the new ways of being and doing mission that are required of us today. Guided by the

Holy Spirit, we need to continue to struggle with these issues within the context of today's reality and discover new ways to respond as missionaries called to participate in the Mission of God. We have become more aware of the mutuality of our vocation – to give of ourselves and to receive from the riches of other cultures, theologies, histories, journeys.

Yes, we did grow together as a *faith community*, a *learning community* and a *discerning community*. Our eyes, ears, hearts have been opened by powerful words and powerful images that will remain with us. You confirmed this in your group sharing of a word or phrase and some artwork that accompanied them. What did we hear and share? What did we discover together?

	seeds that give hope	abundant life	
gift	beauty celebration	communion challenges	diversity
power of the powerless		contemplative attitude	transformation
of the world view	efficacious love		
the need to befriend the dragon			
Identity	diversity	unity	
dialogue	inculturation		
discipleship of equals	commitment with life		

Together we discerned that there is a need to discover and embrace new ways of mission today... new ways of being missionaries today. How?

Celebrate diversity to listen to life – in which God speaks

Through a compassionate and contemplative attitude toward daily life,

we can experience and appreciate unity in diversity

In communion Kaleidoscope

Hold on to hope, to passion, to identity, to inclusion

Dialogue with creation ... with indigenous cultures/traditions ...with

religions ...with the poor ...with women

Trinitarian model for mission Mutual strengthening

Struggle ... hope Equality Power to serve

Walking together (migration, women issues, human trafficking, inclusivity)

Trinitarian model of Church (equality, mutuality, inclusion)

I think it is safe to say that our SEDOS experience has been very blessed and life-giving for each of us. But, like every experience, it was for just a brief moment in time. Now each of us has to decide whether this experience will simply become a fond memory that we store away with other fond memories or whether it will become a catalyst for change in our own personal lives and in the life of our respective institutes. Could this experience become a catalyst for collaboration among our congregations? Could we unite our energies more effectively to create "synergy" in response to the new needs of mission today?

Hopefully, the energy that is clearly present in this room will extend outward – that each of us is committed to carry forward the challenges, the questions, the desire to search together (to dream together) for the best ways to live and love as disciples of Christ Jesus actively engaged in the Mission of God today, in the here and now.

We did not come to Nemi to build tents. The pilgrimage must continue. The time has come for us to move on... to move forward to share the fruits of this conference with members of our own communities and beyond.

Let us pause for a moment to consider ...

Is there a personal commitment that you can identify in your heart – at this moment – that has the potential for being shared with your community at home?

Is there a commitment to continue growing as a learning community and a discerning community with our own brothers and sisters that can have positive effects on our missionary outreach in the world?

Is there a potential *concrete action* emerging in your heart that could capture the imagination of your brothers and sisters so that a community commitment could evolve and be embraced by all?

Ours has been, and must continue to be, a pilgrimage of engagement and mutuality.

This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Let us go forward to proclaim Christ Jesus dwelling among us!



THANK YOU BY THE PRESIDENT

I would now like to take a moment to honour and thank all those who helped to make our pilgrimage journey in Nemi so enriching.

To each of our speakers I say a very great **Thank You!**

Fr. **Luis Alberto** Nahuelanca, Señora **Maria Clara** Lucchetti Bingemer, Señora **Emilia** Robles, Fr. **Nicanor** Sarmiento, Sr. **Theresa** Lowe Ching, and Sr. **Arul Mary** Durairaj.

Thank you to the members of the **Ad Hoc Committee** who prepared the programme:

Sr. **Maria Soledad** Saenz Rico, Bro. **Jorge** Gallardo, Fr. **Luis Alberto** Nahuelanca and Fr. **Arlindo** Dias.

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Fr. **Arlindo** Dias, Fr. **Roland** Rivard, Sr. **Filo** Hirota, Bro. **Teofilo** Minga

Thank You to the **SVD community** at Centro AdGentes here in Nemi for their wonderful hospitality and service to us during the conference: Fathers Michael, Tony, James and Peter.

A special thanks also to Mr. Natale and the lay staff.

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Special thanks to our **translators** for their marvelous service – always given with a smile.

Thank you to Fr. Milan Bubak for his participation in the liturgy (with music) and his availability to take pictures throughout the Conference.

And an extra special **Thank you** goes to the members of the SEDOS Executive Committee: Sr. Gisela, Fr. Arlindo, Fr. Roland, Sr. Filo, Bro. Teofilo, Bro. Stephen, Sr. Marina and Sr. Felicia (who could not be present with us).

We thank especially our Executive Director, Sister Nzenzili – whose service for SEDOS cannot be measured. She went above and beyond the call of duty – with love.

Nemi, Italy: 8-12 May 2012

Sr. Georgeanne M. Donovan, smsm

MI EXPERIENCIA MISIONERA EN CARTAGENA BOLIVAR – COLOMBIA



Cuando hago una relectura de mis doce años en Colombia, veo en primer lugar los ocho años vivido en el barrio el Pozón de Cartagena de Indias del Departamento de Bolívar.

Eso no quiere decir que desconozco las primeras emociones en los barrios pobres de los altos de Bogotá, más bien por el solo hecho de que estos primeros años fueron como un ensayo, una experiencia a la misma vez entusiasta e ingenua.

Cartagena de Indias es mi camino de Damasco

Tal vez es muy atrevido de mi parte compararme al gran apóstol Pablo, pero en los callejones del Barrio el Pozón Jesús se me ha revelado.

Cartagena es una ciudad situada en el norte de Colombia, la Costa del Mar Caribe.

Es una ciudad fantástica que guarda los secretos de la historia en sus murallas y sus balcones; pero a pesar de lo atractivo de su cultura y lo hermoso de su paisaje, esta ciudad esconde una realidad macabra.

La mitad de sus ciudadanos vive en condiciones de extrema pobreza en los barrios subnormales.

Nuestra presencia como comunidad SMSM

Nuestra comunidad ha recibido la misión de acompañar una parroquia sin párroco e ir **buscando con todos los signos del Reino**

Allí aprendí a obedecer a la Voz interior que muchas veces se hizo tan imperativo ante mis momentos de cobardía.

Son muchos los desafíos que hay que enfrentar dentro del Plan Arquidiocesano de Pastoral.: El mayor impacto ambiental, social y económico de las presiones que sufre este pueblo se relaciona con la ocupación de zonas de alto riesgo por sus sectores influyentes como subnormales.

La situación de la vivienda en esta zona es realmente alarmante e déficit cualitativo y las circunstancias de insalubridad.

La desnutrición sigue siendo una de las causas de muerte ya que familias enteras no acceden a una dieta alimentaria adecuada.

La inhumana pobreza que genera el fenómeno de desplazamiento aunque haya varias causas como la violencia guerrillera.

La fragilidad de la institución familiar cuya crisis de valores afecta sobremanera la familia. Son pocos los que se atreven creer en la importancia de una vida familiar estable.

El abandono del hogar por parte de uno u otro y sobre todo los niños abandonados con frecuencia.

Mirada pastoral

Mi comunidad y yo, colaboramos con la Iglesia local en sus intentos de promover una sociedad más humana y justa a la luz de la Palabra encarnada en cada una de estas situaciones.

Mi tarea como responsable y coordinadora de las distintas actividades pastorales fue una continua toma de consciencia de que la fe que pretendo compartir con el pueblo del Pozón ha de

convertirse en audacia para el amor, para el servicio en osadía y coraje para asumir la necesidad de mis hermanas y hermanos.

Nada fue fácil, pues a pesar de los esfuerzos realizados por otros, son aún la grande mayoría de los bautizados que no evangelizados que no ha tenido oportunidad de educar su fe ni siquiera de forma básica.

A veces me sentí demasiado pequeña, casi inútil ante las urgencias que se dan en algunos momentos.

Me acuerdo las noches de inundaciones que pasamos sacando niños y ancianos del fango, sin luz, solo mujeres sudando cuando los hombres trataban cada uno de salvar lo suyo.

Tengo que reconocer que al lado del costeño no hay lugar para tristeza. Es sorprendente la espontaneidad, la jovialidad de esta gente.

Puerta abierta al mensaje de la Buena Nueva aunque con mucha paciencia. Sabiendo que son amantes de las fiestas et la religiosidad popular, aprendí a ir entrando pequeñas luces en estas riquezas culturales que ya tienen.

Procesiones largas de la Semana Santa, Novena de Navidad con maravillosos Villancicos, Las Fiestas Marianas, Festival de dulces, el Día de la Madre, se han convertido oportunidades para reunir más gente y descubrir juntos el Sentido verdadero de las celebraciones humanas.

Luego una vez que nos conocemos.

Hna. Maria KAMPORORO, SMSM

De Rwanda

Misionera en Colombia

SEDOS M'A DONNE LE GOUT DE LA VIE MISSIONNAIRE

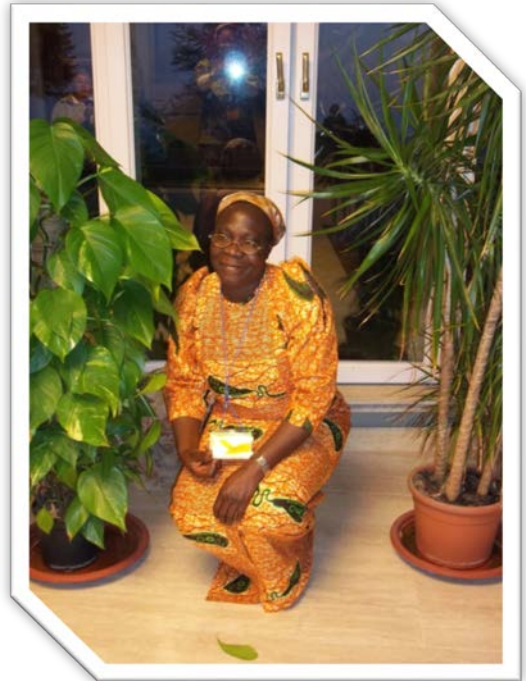
A la Sœur NZENZILI Lucie : SEDOS

Je tiens à vous remercier pour cette opportunité que vous aviez offerte de pouvoir participer au Séminaire du SEDOS sur "Le Printemps des Pauvres".

Je suis d'abord émerveillée pour l'organisation du SEDOS à travers les conférences, par le fait de faire connaître et divulguer les différentes expériences missionnaires tenant compte du message du Concile Vatican II.

Ma reconnaissance et gratitude à vous, Ya Lucie, parce que vous m'avez permis pas seulement de faire une expérience missionnaire, mais aussi de faire la découverte de la culture des peuples latino-américains de plus près tout en me rendant compte de ressemblance avec la culture africaine.

Le SEDOS, à travers vous, m'a redonné le goût de la vie missionnaire et m'a fait prendre conscience de la grandeur du travail et de l'apport dans la collaboration avec les autres pour redonner espoir aux pauvres, à la femme en rapport avec le message évangélique.



Je pars avec joie, force d'avoir appris beaucoup de ce Séminaire. Dans mon apostolat, je rechercherai à redonner aux pauvres et à la femme sa place mais surtout à faire prendre conscience à ces derniers qu'ils sont importants dans la construction de la communauté, au sein de l'Eglise. La femme ne doit pas attendre mais elle devra mettre la main dans la pâte, connaître le message, c'est-à-dire s'informer et s'instruire pour acquérir ou mieux reconquérir sa place au sein de l'Eglise. Ceci vaut aussi pour les laïcs ; chercher à faire promouvoir leur formation au sein de la communauté ainsi que leur participation sera efficace.

Il ne suffit d'être envoyée dans un pays pour être appelé « missionnaire », mais il faut savoir apporter sa contribution pour sortir le peuple de son ignorance et cela exige une formation. C'est pourquoi nous encourageons les efforts et le travail de SEDOS dans l'organisation de ces rencontres qui informent et forment les missionnaires sur les différentes réalités et proposent des méthodes de travail pour pouvoir résoudre tant peu soit les différents problèmes.

C'est ma première fois de participer à ces rencontres si riches et enrichissantes. Elles m'ont permis d'avoir une idée claire sur la vie missionnaire et sur les expériences de différents pays ; mais aussi elles m'ont permis de prendre position sur mon apport dans l'Eglise.

Mais quand je regarde autour de moi, je sens une difficulté, exprimée par le manque de formation au préalable avant de commencer une mission.

Suggestions et recommandations

C'est pourquoi je voudrai demander au bureau de SEDOS ce qui suit :

Une formation, surtout pour les Sœurs Africaines en mission en Europe précisément, celles qui sont ici en Italie afin de nous permettre de réfléchir aussi sur notre apport, notre présence, dans l'accomplissement de cette mission.

Pendant les rencontres, si possible, faire de sorte que les Sœurs Africaines, Européennes et Asiatiques en mission en Italie puissent partager aussi leurs expériences, C'est un enrichissement mutuel.

Enfin, je remercie vivement les organisateurs et membres de SEDOS pour cette invitation. J'espère revenir pour d'autres rencontres surtout en cette préparation du 50^{ème} anniversaire de l'existence de SEDOS.

Sœur Evelyne BASUNGA,
Sœur de Saint Thérèse
de l'Enfant Jésus de KINSHASA
e-mail : ebasunga@yahoo.fr

MY EXPERIENCE OF SEDOS SEMINAR 2012



I have to begin by first of all thanking God for considering me worthy despite my unworthiness to participate in the missionary awareness and apostolate especially in my Archdiocese of Onitsha – Nigeria, Africa as Mission Coordinator. It is in the course of searching for the better ways of undertaking this assignment that I came in contact with SEDOS. I thank God also for inspiring the SEDOS Executive Director to take this bold step by inviting me to participate in this year's SEDOS Residential Seminar. For the Executive Director, Sr. L. Nzenzili MBOMA, I say a big THANK YOU for allowing God to use you for this noble action. I pray God to continue to bless and strengthen you as you carry on this your all important and demanding assignment.

This is my first time of attending such a seminar where almost 99.9% are people not of my race and culture. Despite that I find it a very interesting and enriching experience. It made me believe really that God is good and that Catholic is ONE. I began to appreciate being a Catholic more. This is because despite the diversity in culture, there are a lot of similarity in cultures and almost the same way of approaching God the Creator of us all.

I learnt a lot from the lectures and sharing of different religious institutes on their missionary activities. I noticed the sacrifices many congregations are making to see that problems of the poor are reduced and that they hear the word of God especially by their relationship with them (witness). I am very happy to learn various activities that are carried on by different congregation. What interests me more is the approach. I learnt a lot in that, especially that of care of the immigrants. Though in my area in Africa, the case may not be the same but there are similar cases that can be handled that way. I will not forget the life of Sr. Dorothy STANG, SNDdeN of Brazil. It touched me a lot even though I didn't understand the language very well.

My experience at this seminar is telling me that there is need to look into the missionary formation of the religious institutes in order to meet up with the demands of our missionary vocations. Practically all the religious institutes are missionary congregation, so it demands that the members be equipped for the mission work. From the formation Houses, all the Aspirants should be in tune with the places where the institute is on mission. Below are what every missionary should be informed of.

The missionaries approach to the people must be human, personal, relevant and humble. At times these are lacking in us, we tend to boss rather than give humble service.

- The missionary must reflect the image of Christ, thus be docile to the will of the Father
- Be constantly in communion with Jesus meaning contemplative in action.
- Self-emptying like Jesus, vulnerable, accepting the daily crosses without which there will be no resurrection. "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies
- Ability to forgive injuries readily whether real or imaginary no matter how difficult.
- Holiness of life, our holiness is God with us – Emmanuel
- Loving and kind hearted, love is specific to Christian discipleship. Christian mission is anchored in love and originated in love, for God so loved the world.....

- Reflect joy which is the fundamental element of missionary spirituality. (EN)
- Offer the gospel message as God's love for humanity in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, preferential option for the poor but not exclusive message for the poor and fraternal life.
- Avoid psychological transportation in the preaching of the truth. In other words a missionary should not preach one's opinions and problems.
- Above all a **heart that discern**; to discern is to take a contemplative stance. The kind that fine-tunes us to recognize God's presence in our busy lives.

The spirituality for today must be a reflective one. Any spirituality that blinds us to reality is counterfeit, any spirituality that forbids us to question does not move us closer to God or the truth. The quest of St. Ignatius of Loyola to find God in all things is to be embraced by all. To be a missionary is to have a **discerning heart** and attitude so that God's will is almost instinctively recognized. This is a way of keeping our missionary call authentic and evolving.

As one begins the mission activities, it is important to look at the **FOUR SIDES OF LIFE**: Economic, Political, Social and Cultural. Why? For a better understanding of the society in question. This makes for a better communication of the good news, making it relevant, meaningful and acceptable. We learn more about God by learning how different cultures relate to God. So the study of culture is a tool for our mission reflection. To understand well the Gospel and the manner in which Jesus who was sent carried forward God's project, we need to know the situation of the people among whom we work, the cultural, economic, political, sociological, psychological, linguistic and religious structures which dehumanize people and keep them from attaining their full stature as children of God are the sins of the world. The WORD must reveal the real meaning of society, clarify the confusion and unmask the cover-ups so that evil and goodness will appear as such. This is the liberating truth of the Gospel.

Cultural Dimension:

Culture is a way of life of people. It is the way people have organized themselves to relate to each other, to nature and to the Supreme Being. The culture of any group is one way that God reveals himself to the group, was God present in each locality before the arrival of the first Christian missionaries? Yes! God was present in whichever way and whatever word was used for God. Pope John Paul II defined culture as "the form of man's self-expression in his journey through history". Language is the best vehicle for the transmission of culture. Thus missionaries are urged to learn the local language of the people and acquire professional training and skills. (Maximum Illud, EN, AG, RM).

Economic Dimension:

What is the general economic profile of the locality, what is produced, who produces and who benefits? The economic situation, is it self-reliance vs people dependency. Economic problem, is it unemployment, roads etc. This conditions the peoples' openness to the message.

Political Dimension:

Who gives orders, who exercise power, who obeys, for instance, what is the Church/State relationship among other things.

Ecclesial Dimension:

What is the religious climate in the locality, what is the health of the local Church, are there believers committed or are they conventional or devotional Christian, what is the degree of ecumenical co-operation? Etc.

Social Classes:

What social groups exist, how do they organize themselves? Jesus was sent into the world not to condemn the world, nor to belong to it. He was sent to redeem, He was sent to serve and not to be served. We perceive our world today as secularized, resources are plentiful, the world of science and technology and stimulation is not to be feared but experienced. The senses are bombarded by psychedelic colors and amplified sound, by uninhibited books and films, by bright clothing, spicy foods and what have you, name them. What does the missionary do, faced by all these? To condemn, or if you can't beat them you join them. How best can this missionary be formed. *Formation of Conscience and a Discerning heart are inevitable.*

Evangelization

Evangelization is an essential part of the Church's mission. To proclaim the good news whether anything happens or not (2 Tim 4:2). The proclamation is not defined in terms of success, not even in terms of methods, but only in terms of the message. Evangelization is sharing the Good News with others. The good news is Jesus and that God so loved us that He sent this Jesus, His only Son who came and died for us while we were still sinners. He was resurrected by the Father and through this paschal mystery He offer us forgiveness of sins. It is the Spirit as Paul says that speaks in us.

Sr. M. Bennet Azuka Ezeokoli IHM
PMS Director
Onitsha Archdiocese, Nigeria

J'AI FAIT LA DECOUVERTE DE SEDOS

Mes impressions

Très chère Grande Sœur ,

A l'issue de ce Séminaire
invitation que vous
ma propre
sur la Mission.
découverte de
dénommé
formation
religieuses

C'est
entendu parler
vous je l'ai

Quant à
participer, je n'ai pas
comme encore en
plus. Néanmoins tout me semble bien organisé et bien planifié.



je dois vous traduire ma gratitude pour cette
avez adressée à notre Congrégation et à
personne pour participer à ce Séminaire
C'est vraiment pour moi une grande
savoir qu'il existe une structure
« SEDOS » qui s'occupe de la
permanente des religieux et
missionnaires.

une structure dont je n'avais jamais
depuis que je suis religieuse ; grâce à
découverte, merci beaucoup.

l'organisation, étant ma première fois d'y
grande chose à dire, je me suis trouvée
observation, peut-être prochainement, j'en dirai

Les conférences données jusque-là sont encore entrain d'ouvrir mes horizons missionnaires bien qu'elles me semblent pour un premier temps difficiles à pénétrer suite à la difficulté que j'éprouve dans la salle : C'est comme si je suis entrain de suivre la même conférence en deux langues différentes ; c'est-à-dire que le conférencier ou la conférencière parle très fort si bien que sa voix prime sur la traduction et cela fait échapper beaucoup de choses à mon intention.

Comme suggestions, je demande à SEDOS, à travers vous, que compte tenu des difficultés que nous rencontrons sur le terrain comme missionnaires, de concevoir et de prévoir pour l'avenir, dans la mesure du possible des enseignements pratiques sur, par exemple :

Ce qu'est la mission et comment s'y prendre pour que la mission réussisse

De tout cœur je vous remercie.

Sœur Béatrice NTUMBA,
Sœur de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus de Mbujimayi
La République Démocratique du Congo

Gaetano Mazzoleni, IMC

L'OPZIONE PER GLI INDIGENI NEL DOCUMENTO DI APARECIDA

La Conferenza dei Vescovi dell'America Latina e dei Caraibi che si celebrò in maggio 2007 in Aparecida - Brasile, si è occupata della tematica indigena.

La sfortunata frase del Papa Benedetto XVI nel discorso inaugurale, dove dopo avere riconosciuto ai Popoli indigeni le "loro ricche tradizioni religiose" affermò che la prima evangelizzazione *l'annuncio di Gesù e del suo Vangelo non suppose, in nessun momento, un'alienazione delle culture precolombiane, e neppure un'imposizione di una cultura straniera*", suscitò una forte reazione di molti leader indigeni del Continente ed esigette dalle Conferenza chiarificazioni e rettifiche.

Questa sfortunata espressione giocò in beneficio affinché si prendesse sul serio la causa indigena dentro la Chiesa.

Per comprendere meglio quello che dice il Documento di Aparecida circa la relazione coi Popoli indigeni, è opportuno ricordare che questa relazione è stata profondamente marcata per la storia. Sinteticamente si può dire che da parte della Chiesa si sono dati e si continuano a dare tre differenti atteggiamenti:

1. - Atteggiamento di appoggio, per azione ed omissione, alla conquista, alla colonizzazione e all'invasione.

Dalla conquista fino al giorno di oggi i Popoli indigeni hanno visto i loro territori invasi, i loro diritti calpestati, le loro culture non riconosciute e non rispettate. Pietosamente molti membri della Chiesa lungo la storia si sono identificati con le politiche e gli interessi della società dominante e si sono comportati, con la loro azione o col loro silenzio, come alleati, prima dei conquistatori, posteriormente dei colonizzatori, e finalmente dei moderni invasori. In questo contesto l'evangelizzazione si trasformò in conquista spirituale e distruzione del mondo religioso indigeno.

Come è normale, questo ha provocato in molti indigeni un atteggiamento di rifiuto e risentimento verso la Chiesa.

2. Atteggiamento di compassione.

Di fronte alla situazione di emarginazione, umiliazione e depredazione dei Popoli indigeni *"i più poveri tra i "poveri"*, come li ha definiti la Conferenza di Puebla (1979), altri membri della Chiesa, specialmente i missionari più vicini ad essi, hanno assunto un atteggiamento di compassione, che li ha portati non solamente a lavorare per "l'incorporazione degli indigeni alla Chiesa cattolica", ma anche a impegnarsi "nella difesa e nell'elevazione spirituale, morale e sociale della popolazione indigena dell'America latina", a preoccuparsi affinché essi fossero, sempre e da tutte le parti, "protetti e difesi nelle loro persone e nei loro beni" (come dice il documento della Conferenza di Rio de Janeiro, 1955).

È innegabile che molti missionari lavorarono e continuano a lavorare, in condizioni molte volte difficili, per la "difesa e l'elevazione spirituale, morale e sociale" degli indigeni, prestando una speciale attenzione all'istruzione e alla salute. Ma è innegabile anche che questa "elevazione" riguardava non solamente l' "incorporazione" alla Chiesa, non prendendo in considerazione i valori religiosi e la spiritualità dei Popoli indigeni, promuovendo l'integrazione dei Popoli indigeni nella cultura e nella società dominante, ignorando i valori propri delle culture assumendo atteggiamenti di paternalismo e di assistenzialismo.

Di qui la sfiducia ed in molti casi il rifiuto verso l'azione della Chiesa.

3. Atteggiamento di accompagnamento e dialogo.

Fin dai tempi della conquista ci sono stati dei membri della Chiesa che si sono opposti e hanno alzato la voce di fronte alla conquista materiale e spirituale, e posteriormente alla colonizzazione dei Popoli indigeni in nome della loro fede cristiana; per questo motivo condivisero la sorte degli amerindi soffrendo persecuzioni e perfino il martirio.

Riprendendo il grido e l'azione di questi "profeti", la Conferenza di Santo Domingo (1992), incoraggiata dal papa Juan Pablo II, fece l'opzione per un'evangelizzazione inculturata e liberatrice dei Popoli indigeni, basandola sul riconoscimento dei Popoli indigeni come soggetti della loro storia, e sul riconoscimento dei loro valori religiosi e delle loro culture.

Nella nuova tappa che stanno vivendo i Popoli indigeni che li sta collocando progressivamente come protagonisti nel processo di cambiamento delle strutture coloniali del Continente e di costruzione di "un altro mondo possibile", alternativo al modello della globalizzazione capitalista neo-liberale, la Chiesa nei suoi documenti e molti cristiani nella pratica hanno assunto la decisione di farsi compagni del Popolo indigeno e di stabilire un dialogo sincero con le loro culture, le loro religioni e la loro spiritualità.

Tenendo in conto queste tre atteggiamenti, si può leggere obiettivamente quello che dice il Documento di Aparecida.

I – LETTURA DELLA REALTÀ DEI POPOLI INDIGENI

Il Documento di Aparecida offre anzitutto una visione della realtà dei Popoli indigeni nella società e nella Chiesa.

Si deve tener presente che essi vengono normalmente presentati assieme ai Popoli afroamericani e con altri attori sociali come i contadini (campesinos), le donne, i movimenti sociali, che condividono la stessa situazione di emarginazione, e contemporaneamente lo stesso sogno e impegno di cambiamento della situazione (DA 75). Si riconosce che i Popoli indigeni si situano nel contesto di un Continente multi-etnico e pluri-culturale, dove coesistono culture indigene, afroamericane, rurali, urbane e sub-urbane (DA 56), in condizioni disuguali con la chiamata cultura globalizzata (DA 88).

Nella presentazione della realtà, in cui si fondono aspetti positivi ed aspetti problematici, il Documento prende in considerazione molte dimensioni di questa realtà che caratterizza la situazione dei Popoli indigeni.

- Dimensione storica.

Si riconosce che "gli indigeni costituiscono la popolazione più antica del Continente, e sono nella radice ancestrale dell'identità latinoamericana e caraibica" (DA 88), e che "il Vangelo arrivò alle nostre terre in mezzo ad un drammatico e disuguale incontro di paesi e culture" (DA 4).

- Dimensione etnica e culturale.

Nel contesto della ricchezza e diversità culturale dei paesi dell'America latina ed i Caraibi si afferma che " **gli indigeni sono soprattutto, "altri", differenti** che esigono rispetto e riconoscimento. La società tende a sottovalutarli, ignorando la loro differenza" (DA 89), e non sempre hanno trovato spazi ed appoggio per esprimere la ricchezza della propria cultura e la saggezza della loro identità" (DA 554). Inoltre viene ricordato che già in Santo Domingo i vescovi riconobbero che i Popoli indigeni "sono possessori di innumerevoli ricchezze culturali che sono nel basamento della nostra identità attuale" (Messaggio dell'IV Conferenza ai Paesi dell'America ed i Caraibi, 38), (DA 92); e si afferma che "queste culture (indigene) sono dinamiche e sono in interazione permanente tra di loro e con le differenti proposte culturali" (DA 57).

- Dimensione etico – spirituale.

"In Santo Domingo (SD 245) i pastori riconoscevano che i popoli indigeni coltivano valori umani di gran significato" (DA 92).

- "Tra essi possiamo segnalare: apertura all'azione di Dio per i frutti della terra, il carattere sacro della vita umana, la valorizzazione della famiglia, il senso della solidarietà e la corresponsabilità nel lavoro comune, l'importanza del culturale, la credenza in una vita ultraterrena" (SD 17) (DA 93);

- "Di essi (i Popoli indigeni) apprezziamo il loro profondo rispetto per la vita comunitaria, presente in tutta la creazione, nell'esistenza quotidiana e nella millenaria esperienza religiosa che dinamizza le loro culture" (DA 529);

- Si "apprezzano specialmente gli indigeni per il loro rispetto alla natura e per l'amore alla madre terra fonte di alimento, casa comune ed altare del condividere umano" (D A 472);

- Finalmente si sottolinea che "le culture indigene si caratterizzano, soprattutto, per il loro profondo attaccamento alla terra e per la vita comunitaria, e per una certa ricerca di Dio", (DA 56), e che "queste culture coesistono in condizioni disuguali con la chiamata cultura globalizzata. Esse esigono riconoscimento ed offrono valori che costituiscono una risposta agli antivalori della cultura che si impone attraverso i mezzi di comunicazione di massa, inoltre si caratterizzano per il comunitarismo, la valorizzazione della famiglia, l'apertura alla trascendenza e per la solidarietà" (DA 57).

- Dimensione sociale di marginalità, esclusione, povertà e sofferenza, conseguenza attuale della globalizzazione senza solidarietà.

Si sottolinea che la situazione sociale dei Popoli indigeni "è marcata per l'esclusione della povertà" (DA 89), che essi in molte occasioni non sono trattati con dignità ed uguaglianza di condizioni. Una globalizzazione senza solidarietà colpisce negativamente i settori più poveri. Non si tratta oramai semplicemente di sfruttamento e di oppressione, bensì di qualcosa di nuovo: l'esclusione sociale.

Con essa rimane lesionata, nella sua stessa radice, l'appartenenza alla società nella quale si vive, perché non si sta oramai sotto, nella periferia e senza potere, ma si sta fuori della società.

Gli esclusi non sono solamente "sfruttati" ma "rimanenze" e "eliminabili" (DA 65 e cf. DA 402); oggi "i Popoli indigeni sono minacciati nella loro esistenza fisica, culturale e spirituale; nei loro stili di vita; nelle loro identità; nella loro diversità; nei loro territori e progetti. Alcuni comunità indigene si trovano fuori delle loro terre perché queste sono state invase o degradate, o non hanno terra sufficiente per sviluppare le loro culture. Soffrono gravi attacchi alla loro identità e sopravvivenza, perché la globalizzazione economica e culturale mette in pericolo la loro propria esistenza come popoli differenti.

La loro progressiva trasformazione culturale provoca la rapida sparizione di alcune lingue e culture. La migrazione, forzata dalla povertà, sta influenzando profondamente sul cambiamento di abitudini, di relazioni e perfino di religione" (DA 90).

Il Documento presta un'attenzione speciale alle donne indigene: "Urge ascoltare il clamore delle donne, tante volte taciuto, di donne che sono sottoposte a molte forme di esclusione e di violenza in tutte le forme e in tutte le tappe delle loro vite. Tra di esse, le donne povere, indigene ed afroamericane, hanno sofferto una doppia marginalizzazione" (DA 454).

Le comunità indigene soffrono anche le conseguenze di una insufficiente politica agraria: "La devastazione dei boschi e della biodiversità con un atteggiamento depredatorio ed egoista, include la responsabilità morale di chi la promuove, perché mette in pericolo la vita di milioni di persone e specialmente l'habitat di contadini ed indigeni che sono espulsi verso terre inadatte e pericolose di pendii (laderas) e verso le grandi città per vivere ammassati nei cinturoni di miserie" (DA 473).

- Dimensione politica.

Questa si manifesta nel nuovo protagonismo dei Popoli indigeni insieme ad altri settori. Si ricorda che "gli indigeni e gli afroamericani emergono ora nella società e la Chiesa e reclamano il pieno riconoscimento dei loro diritti individuali e collettivi; chiedono di essere presi in considerazione nella cattolicità con la loro cosmovisione, i loro valori e le loro identità

particolari" (DA 91). Si apprezza "il protagonismo che stanno acquistando i settori che furono marginalizzati "desplazados": donne, indigeni, afroamericani, contadini ed abitanti delle aree marginali delle grandi città" (DA 128). Si riconosce che "con la presenza protagonista della società civile e l'irruzione di nuovi attori sociali come gli indigeni, gli afroamericani, le donne, i professionisti, un'estesa classe media ed i settori emarginati organizzati si sta fortificando la democrazia partecipativa, e si stanno creando maggiori spazi di partecipazione politica. Questi gruppi stanno prendendo coscienza del potere che hanno tra mani e della possibilità di generare cambiamenti importanti per la realizzazione di politiche pubbliche più giuste che riversino la loro situazione di esclusione" (DA 75).

- Dimensione ecclesiale.

Si ringrazia il Signore "perché ha fatto di questo Continente uno spazio di comunione e comunicazione di popoli e culture indigene" (DA 128); si nota che "gli indigeni emergono ora nella Chiesa" e "reclamano di essere presi in considerazione nella cattolicità con la loro cosmovisione, con i loro valori e le loro identità particolari" (DA 91); "La Chiesa accompagna gli indigeni nelle loro lotte per i loro legittimi diritti" (DA 89), "apprezza specialmente come gli indigeni per il loro rispetto alla natura e l'amore alla madre terra fonte di alimento, casa comune ed altare del condividere umano" (DA 472). Già in Santo Domingo "i pastori riconoscevano che 'i popoli indigeni coltivano valori umani di gran significato' (SD 245), valori che 'la Chiesa difende ... di fronte alla forza travolgente (arrulladora) delle strutture di peccato manifesti nella società moderna' (SD 243); "posseggono (sono proprietarie) di innumerevoli ricchezze culturali che si trovano nella base della nostra identità attuale" (Messaggio dell'IV Conferenza ai Popoli dell'America Latina e i Caraibi, 38).

Dalla prospettiva della fede, "questi valori e convinzioni sono frutto dei 'semi del Verbo' che erano già presenti ed operavano nei loro antenati" (SD 245) (DA 92). Tra essi possiamo segnalare: l'apertura all'azione di Dio per i frutti della terra, il carattere sacro della vita umana, la valorizzazione della famiglia, il senso di solidarietà e corresponsabilità nel lavoro comunitario, l'importanza della dimensione culturale, la credenza in una vita ultraterrena (SD 17).

Attualmente, il popolo ha arricchito ampiamente questi valori con l'evangelizzazione, e li ha sviluppati in molteplici forme di autentica religiosità popolare" (DA 93). Si nota anche che si sono fatti alcuni sforzi per inculturare la liturgia tra i popoli indigeni" (DA 99b), e finalmente si attesta che "la Chiesa sarà attenta di fronte ai tentativi di sradicare la fede cattolica dalle comunità indigene, con cui si lascerebbero in una situazione di indifesa e confusione davanti alle minacce (embates) delle ideologie e di alcuni gruppi alienanti, che attenterebbero al bene delle stesse comunità" (DA 531).

II – RIFLESSIONE TEOLOGICA SU LA REALTÀ INDIGENA

Il Documento di Aparecida dopo avere considerato la realtà dei Popoli indigeni in tutte le sue dimensioni nella società e nella Chiesa, con le sue luci ed ombre, la torna a riconsiderare alla luce della fede per scoprire in essa la presenza dello Spirito di Dio e della sua azione salvatrice.

1. Momento di grazia.

La Conferenza riconosce come un "momento di grazia", l'opportunità di una nuova Pentecoste, l'emergenza ed il protagonismo dei Popoli indigeni, ed in generale dei gruppi sociali emarginati fino ad ora: gli indigeni emergono ora nella società e la Chiesa.

Questo è un "**Kairós**" per approfondire l'incontro della Chiesa con questi settori umani che reclamano il pieno riconoscimento dei loro diritti individuali e collettivi, essere presi in considerazione nella cattolicità con la loro cosmovisione, i loro valori e le loro identità particolari, per vivere una nuova Pentecoste ecclesiale" (DA 91).

"Ringraziamo per il protagonismo che stanno acquistando i settori che furono marginalizzati "desplazados": donne, indigeni, afroamericani, contadini ed abitanti di aree marginali delle grandi città" (DA 128).

2. Semi del Verbo

La Conferenza scopre e riconosce la presenza di "semi del Verbo" nei valori culturali dei Popoli indigeni, la presenza dello Spirito di Dio già prima dell'evangelizzazione.

"Già in Santo Domingo, i pastori riconoscevano che:

- "I popoli indigeni coltivano valori umani di gran significato" (SD 245), valori che "la Chiesa difende... davanti alla forza travolgente delle strutture di peccato manifeste nella società moderna" (SD 243);
- "Sono possessori di innumerevoli ricchezze culturali che stanno alla base della nostra identità attuale" (Messaggio dell'IV Conferenza ai Paesi dell'America Latina ed i Caraibi, 38); e,
- Dalla prospettiva della fede, "questi valori e queste convinzioni sono frutto dei "semi del Verbo" che stavano già presenti ed operavano nei loro antenati" (SD 245) (DA 92).
- Come discepoli di Gesù Cristo, incarnato nella vita di tutti i popoli, scopriamo e riconosciamo dal punto di vista della fede che sono "semi del Verbo" (SD 245) presenti nelle tradizioni e culture dei popoli indigeni dell'America latina. Di essi apprezziamo la loro profonda stima comunitaria per la vita, presente in tutta la creazione, nell'esistenza quotidiana e nella millenaria esperienza religiosa che dinamizza le loro culture, quella che giunge alla pienezza nella rivelazione del vero viso di Dio per Gesù Cristo" (SD 529).

"Tra essi, si possono segnalare:

- apertura all'azione di Dio per i frutti della terra,
- il carattere sacro della vita umana,
- la valorizzazione della famiglia,
- il senso di solidarietà e corresponsabilità nel lavoro comune,
- l'importanza dell'aspetto culturale,
- la credenza nella vita eterna (SD 17).

Attualmente, il popolo ha arricchito ampiamente questi valori per l'evangelizzazione, e li ha sviluppati in molteplici forme di autentica religiosità" (DA 93).

3. Cultura alternativa

La Conferenza riconosce che le culture indigene, insieme alle culture afroamericane, meticce, campagnole, urbane e suburbane, le culture dei poveri propongono un modello di vita alternativo alla cultura globalizzata e i valori più vicini allo spirito del Vangelo.

"Queste culture coesistono in condizioni disuguali con la chiamata cultura globalizzata. Esse esigono riconoscimento ed offrono valori che costituiscono una risposta agli antivalori della cultura che si impongono per mezzo dei mezzi di comunicazione di massa: comunitarismo, valorizzazione della famiglia, apertura alla trascendenza e solidarietà" (DA,57).

III - ORIENTAZIONI PASTORALI

La rilettura della realtà, con le sue luci e le sue ombre, alla luce della fede, porta ad alcune opzioni pastorali:

1. Accompagnamento dei Popoli indigeni nella loro camminare storico.

IMPEGNO

"La Chiesa accompagna gli indigeni nelle lotte per i loro legittimi diritti" (DA 89).

"Come discepoli e missionari al servizio della vita, accompagniamo i popoli indigeni ed originari nel rinverimento delle loro identità ed organizzazioni proprie, la difesa del territorio, un'istruzione interculturale bilingue e la difesa dei propri diritti.

C'impegniamo anche a creare coscienza circa la realtà indigena ed i suoi valori, attraverso i mezzi di comunicazione sociale ed altri spazi di opinione.

A partire dai principi del Vangelo, appoggiamo la denuncia di atteggiamenti contrari alla vita piena sui nostri popoli originari, e c'impegniamo a proseguire l'opera di evangelizzazione degli indigeni, come pure a procurare gli apprendistati educativi e lavorativi con le trasformazioni culturali che ciò implica" (DA 530).

"Urge ascoltare il clamore, tante volte taciuto, delle donne indigene... " (DA 454)'.

"Nel contesto dell'opzione per i poveri o esclusi, tra essi, gli indigeni, La Chiesa, con la sua Pastorale Sociale, deve dare accoglienza ed accompagnare queste persone escluse negli ambiti che corrispondano" (DA 402).

"In questo compito e con creatività pastorale, devono progettarsi azioni concrete che abbiano incidenza negli Stati per l'approvazione di politiche sociali ed economiche che rispondano alle varie necessità della popolazione e che conducano verso un sviluppo sostenibile" (DA 403).

2. Evangelizzazione inculturata ed inserzione degli indigeni nella vita ecclesiale.

"Come Chiesa che assume la causa dei poveri, incoraggiamo la partecipazione degli indigeni nella vita ecclesiale. Vediamo con speranza il processo di inculturazione discernito alla luce del Magistero. È prioritario fare traduzioni cattoliche della Bibbia e dei testi liturgici nelle loro lingue. È necessario, ugualmente, promuovere maggiormente le vocazioni ed i ministeri ordinati provenienti da queste culture (DA 94).

Il "nostro servizio pastorale alla vita piena dei popoli indigeni esige annunciare Gesù Cristo e la Buona Notizia del Regno di Dio, denunciare le situazioni di peccato, le strutture di morte e le ingiustizie interne ed esterne, fomentare il dialogo interculturale, interreligioso ed ecumenico.

Gesù Cristo è la pienezza della rivelazione per tutti i popoli ed è il centro fondamentale di riferimento per discernere i valori e le deficienze di tutte le culture, comprese le indigene. Per ciò, il maggiore tesoro che possiamo offrire loro è che arrivino all'incontro con Gesù Cristo risuscitato, nostro Salvatore.

Gli indigeni che hanno ricevuto già il Vangelo sono chiamati, come discepoli e missionari di Gesù Cristo, a vivere con immenso allegria la loro realtà cristiana, a dare ragione della loro fede tra le loro comunità ed a collaborare attivamente affinché nessun popolo indigeno dell'America Latina rinneghi la sua fede cristiana, ma, per il contrario, sentano che in Cristo trovano il senso pieno della loro esistenza" (DA 95).

"La Chiesa sarà attenta di fronte ai tentativi di sradicare la fede cattolica dalle comunità indigene, con cui le si lascerebbero in una situazione di indifesa e confusione davanti agli assalti (embates) delle ideologie e di alcuni gruppi alienanti, ciò attenterebbe al bene delle stesse comunità (DA. 531).

Nei seminari e case di formazione, "i giovani provenienti da famiglie povere o da gruppi indigeni richiedono una formazione inculturata, devono ricevere l'adeguata formazione teologica e spirituale per il loro futuro ministero, senza con ciò faccia perdere le loro radici e, in questo modo, possano essere evangelizzatori vicini ai loro popoli e culture" (cf. EAm. 40; RM 54; PDV 32) (DA 325).

CONCLUSIONE

Dopo avere letto ciò che il Documento di Aparecida ha detto circa l'opzione per i Popoli indigeni, ci si sente da una parte contenti per l'attenzione che i Vescovi hanno dato alla realtà indigena, con le sue luci ed ombre, per l'atteggiamento positivo circa l'emergenza e del protagonismo degli indigeni, delle loro culture e dei loro valori, specchiata nella riflessione teologica, e nelle opzioni pastorali.

D'altra parte ci si sente un po' perplessi, perché non si è riconosciuto che gran parte della Chiesa è ancora molto lontana e poco sensibile alla realtà indigena, specialmente alle religioni indigene, e non si è risposto chiaramente al "reclamo ad essere presi in conto nella cattolicità con le loro cosmovisioni, i loro valori e le loro identità particolari, per vivere una nuova Pentecoste" (DA 91), e per questo motivo non si è appoggiato il sorgere di una Chiesa con "cuore e volto" indigeno nella teologia, la pastorale, i ministeri e la spiritualità.

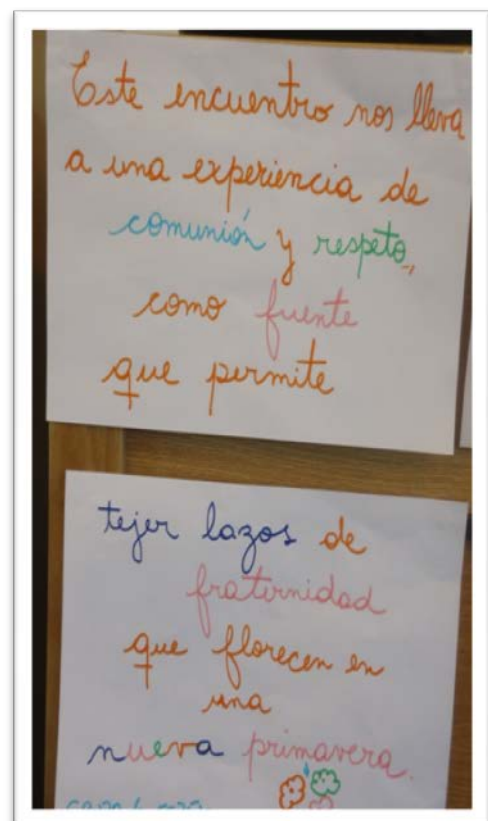
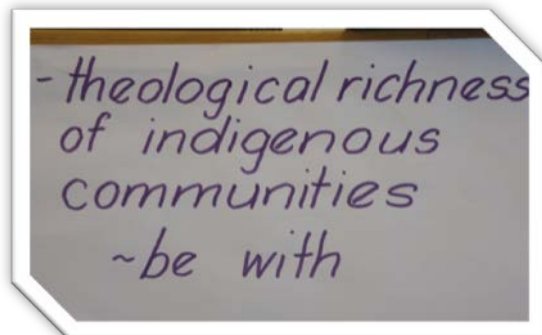
Sfida e compito per il futuro.



P. Gaetano Mazzoleni, IMC

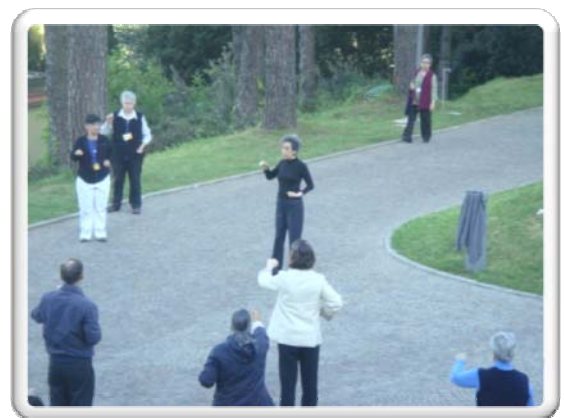


GROUP DYNAMICS: FEW WORDS BUT VERY CHALLENGING



"We were here to listen and to learn
from presentations that would expand our horizons
– to be stretched to think beyond
that which we already knew.
At the same time, we were also here to share
from the depths of our own rich experience."

*Georgeanne Marie DONOVAN, SMSM
Sup.Gen., President of SEDOS*



SEDOS RESIDENTIAL SEMINAR 2013

Theme: “New Wines in New Wineskins”: “The New Evangelization” – Europe, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Date: 23- 27 APRIL 2013

Venue: At Centro “Ad Gentes” NEMI, (ROME)

SEDOS UPCOMING WORKSHOP

When: November 10, 2012

From 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

Where: at the Curia of the Brothers of Christian Schools
Via Aurelia, 476

Speaker: Fr. Paolo SUESS from Brasil.

Theme: The Journey of the Missionary Church
50 years after the Opening of
The Second Vatican Council.

More details will be given in the next issue.
Do not miss this wonderful opportunity and
kindly pass the word on.
Thanks

Lucie Nzenzili MBOMA, FMM
Executive Director