

CAN CATHOLICS SUBSCRIBE TO THE LAUSANNE COVENANT ?

by Fr. Joseph M. CONNORS, SVD

Meeting in Lausanne last July 16 to 25, the "International Congress on World **Evangelization**" stated its understanding of evangelization in a 2800 word document called The Lausanne Covenant. As the final product of many months of research and consultation by Evangelical scholars, and of ten intensive days of discussion at Lausanne by some 2400 invited participants (plus 1300 observers, visitors, and guests), such a covenant would deserve careful study by Catholic scholars and leaders at any time. Coming, as it did, just two months before the Fourth Assembly of the Synod of Bishops convenes in Rome to discuss "Evangelization of the Modern World," it should be of the keenest interest.

The 2800 words of The Lausanne Covenant are divided into fifteen sections of roughly equal length. To each section are appended typically about a dozen Scriptural references. The study of each of these texts for the support it gives to the section it follows could occupy an exegete for some time. The relationship also between the final draft and earlier drafts, and between these and the doctrinal and policy papers delivered during the Congress - more than a dozen major ones in plenary sessions and scores of others in hundreds of special group sessions -- is a challenge to exhaustive work on the part of commentators. Predictably, as Dr. Orlando Costas indicated at the Frankfurt meeting of the International Association for Mission Studies the week after the Congress, some writers are already at work on inside histories of how The Lausanne Covenant was gradually shaped into its final form.

Ordinarily, then, it would be better not to comment on The Lausanne Covenant until the text is more widely published, with interpretations and background articles, in Evangelical periodicals such as Christianity Today, and until the full proceedings of the Congress appear, as promised, in October. But one can also be too circumspect, and the near approach of the Fourth Assembly of the Synod of Bishops makes this document of such timely relevance that it seems to warrant some early reaction from one who, with a half dozen other Roman Catholic visitors among the 3,700 people at Lausanne, witnessed as such as most participants did of what went into its drafting.

The general reaction, then, of at least this one Roman Catholic to The Lausanne Covenant, on the face of it as it now stands in the official and normative English text, is that he can and does agree wholeheartedly with its overall spirit and thrust and with very nearly all of its actual statements.

The spirit and thrust of it are that Evangelicals continue to be very much in earnest about "The Urgency of the Evangelistic Task," which is described in § 9 of the Covenant. They are

ashamed that two thirds of mankind, some 2,700 million people now living on earth, have yet to be evangelized. They are convinced that this is the time to launch new efforts to achieve world evangelization. As for the "moratorium" on missionary assistance now sometimes proposed, Evangelicals agree only to the extent that "A reduction of foreign missionaries and money in an evangelized country may sometimes be necessary to facilitate the national church's growth in self-reliance and to release resources for unevangelized areas." (§9) This does not at all detract from their conviction that "The goal should be, by all available means and at the earliest possible time, that every person will have the opportunity to hear, understand, and receive the good news." (Ibid.)

To secure the doctrinal underpinnings for all of this, The Lausanne Covenant devotes one section each to the Evangelical view of the Bible, of the uniqueness and universality of Christ, of the nature of evangelism, and of the church's role in it.

The section on "The Authority and Power of the Bible," (§2), begins by affirming "the divine inspiration, truthfulness, and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God." A Catholic will agree on this, and will also stand with an Evangelical in professing that the Bible is "without error in all that it affirms." In understanding this latter phrase, however, which was inserted into the final draft of the Lausanne Covenant evidently to underscore Evangelical belief in biblical inerrancy, a Catholic will recall §§ 7 to 13 of the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. He will realize that "the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully, and without error that truth which God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation." (DV §11) At the same time, he "will carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words," and will "have regard for 'literary forms'" contemporary to the time and culture of the inspired human writer. (DV * 12).

Moreover, while a Catholic will not exclude "the opinion that all revelation is in some way, though perhaps obscurely, contained in Scripture," (DV, note 21), he will hold that "it is not from sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed." (DV § 9) This makes The Lausanne Covenant's claim that the Bible is "the only infallible rule of faith and practice" untenable for a Catholic as it stands.

This of course is no surprise. These points of difference have a long history behind them, and no one intended or expected that Lausanne'74 would make Catholics out of Evangelicals or Evangelicals out of Catholics. It is remarkably encouraging, on the other hand, that the Lausanne Congress could say so much about evangelization which a Catholic as well as an Evangelical can fully endorse.

Turning to "The Uniqueness and Universality of Christ", (§3), a Catholic, like an Evangelical believes that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man, and that there is no other name by which we must be saved. He will readily agree that "To proclaim Jesus as

'the Saviour of the world' is not to affirm that all men are either automatically or ultimately saved, still less to affirm that all religions offer salvation in Christ." Like his Evangelical brother, he will "also reject as derogatory to Christ and the gospel every kind of syncretism and dialogue which implies that Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies."

At the same time, in the words of the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, (NAe), a Catholic "rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions," which "often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men." (NAe §2) He may well regret that the sentence in the first draft of The Lausanne Covenant, "We recognize that there are elements of truth in non-Christian religions" was deleted in the final draft. In its place was written, "We recognize that all men have some knowledge of God through his general revelation in nature." Even this is followed by the caution, "But we deny that this can save, for men suppress the truth by their unrighteousness." (§3)

Much that is good is said, then, in this section of The Lausanne Covenant, but in what has been carefully left unsaid about the possibilities of salvation for the unevangelized - either in spite of, or on the occasion of, or indeed sometimes by and because of, the beliefs and practices of various non-Christian religions to which they may adhere — there is a great deal of unfinished theological business. The unfounded fear, repeatedly expressed at Lausanne, that a more favorable view of the possibilities of salvation for many of the unevangelized simply must undermine all motivation for world evangelization should be put aside. The question should be objectively explored as far as possible without anticipating that it must lead to such conclusions. It is still a wide open question theologically, and may never be satisfactorily answered.

In the sections on "The Nature of Evangelism" (§4), and "The Church and Evangelism" (§6), The Lausanne Covenant is admirably clear. In these sections particularly can be seen the hand of Dr. John Stott, of All Souls Church in London, the chief draftsman of the Covenant, who had dealt with these concepts at greater length in a much-applauded address earlier in the Congress.

Briefly, "the Church is at the very center of God's cosmic purpose and is his appointed means of spreading the Gospel." "World evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world." But, as Dr. Stott had explained earlier, the mission of the Church and evangelism are not convertible or co-extensive terms. The mission of the Church is the broader term, and is a general mission of sacrificial service, in continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ. It includes both evangelism and social responsibility as essential but distinct functions.

As for the precise concept of evangelization itself:

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised

from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. (§4)

With the nature of evangelism thus made clear, The Lausanne Covenant could deal in §5 with "Christian Social Responsibility," which was one of the most debated issues of the Congress. From a later position in the first draft, it was moved up in the final text to the position immediately following "The Nature of Evangelism." In the process it was considerably strengthened in its wording. The Covenant asserts that Evangelicals should share God's own concern "for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression." The desire, as expressed repeatedly by major speakers during the Congress, was to acknowledge social responsibility straightforwardly in both theory and practice, but not to conclude, as too many do, that in our time it is identical with or now takes the place of, evangelism. In the words of the Covenant itself:

Reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. (§5)

Space here is far too limited even to touch upon each of the remaining sections of The Lausanne Covenant. They concern evangelism and co-operation, partnership, culture, leadership, spiritual conflict, freedom and persecution, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the return of Christ. Some individual statements in them may have different connotations for a Catholic than for an Evangelical, but as they are formulated they are on the whole certainly acceptable and often quite admirable.

The Lausanne Congress has been the first of a whole series of similar meetings which many Christian Churches, without any apparent pre-arrangement among them to do so, have decided to hold during 1974 and 1975 on the subject of world evangelization. By drafting a succinct statement of how several thousand of our earnest fellow Christians see that subject today, in confrontation with many of the same obstacles and opportunities which face the Catholic Church in its own efforts toward evangelization, the Evangelicals have made an excellent contribution to the whole discussion in The Lausanne Covenant.

Fr. Joseph M. Connors, SVD.

OBSERVATIONS OF ANOTHER CATHOLIC OBSERVERPoints of Convergence

There are many points of convergence between what the Lausanne evangelicals proclaimed and what we Catholics hold.

The evangelicals have a high regard for the word of God as embodied in the sacred scriptures. They believe firmly in Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. They are convinced that there is no salvation apart from Christ. They realize that in the work of evangelization human effort alone is powerless: the Holy Spirit and not the apostle moves man to faith in Christ. The call for prayer in this all-important work of evangelization is rightly made.

Not only do the evangelicals share these truths with us; they also have much to teach us Catholics. Deep within me I felt that the faith of the participants at Lausanne was not an abstract and notional one but one living and efficacious—a faith that changed, motivated, and activated their lives, a faith that united them in prayer and in proclaiming the wonderful works of God. During the ten days I spent among them my faith was nourished and strengthened. I was both edified and stimulated.

Points of Divergence

On the other hand, there are also points of view that we Catholics do not share. A strong fundamentalism characterized the approach of the congress to the sacred scriptures. On this score there were diverse currents of thought discernible but there was no doubt as to the mainstream. The bible is to be taken literally and Christians must beware of modern biblical scholarship that in any way suggest otherwise.

As Catholics we could not subscribe to the conviction expressed at the congress and formulated in the Covenant in these words:

We affirm....both Old and New Testament
Scriptures...the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

The congress was opposed to what it termed "universalism," the idea that someone could be saved without having explicitly heard of Christ and been converted to him. Mankind was depicted as hurtling over the brink of the abyss of damnation and only those who hear of Christ and who accept him will be saved. Hence the urgency for proclaiming the gospel to all men. With the evangelists Catholics too believe that man is saved only in Christ but we also hold that the grace of Christ can and does reach and save men who have as yet not had the opportunity to hear of him.

The sacraments were hardly mentioned at Lausanne. Evidently they play a very minor role in the theology of the evangelists.....

The final point has to do with method rather than with doctrine. The evangelicals are quite open and forward in proclaiming the Good News. They speak of "chattering" about Christ, of "gossiping" about him. One of them explained that, given five minutes with a stranger at a train station or in an airplane, he would already be asking him whether he has been saved by the Lord Jesus or would be handing out literature. Our Catholic tradition is somewhat different; our approach is more reserved.

One sensed that some kind of struggle was going on behind the scenes between those desiring to break away from the WCC and those desiring to work with it. If such a struggle ever took place, then the doves eventually won out, at least for the time being. There is not much in the Covenant that the WCC could not subscribe to. TIME magazine's (5 April 1974) terse appraisal of the outcome was: "The evangelicals at Lausanne laid the groundwork for a postcongress fellowship that could eventually develop into a rival international body." The statement is, as it stands, true;

but I think what is more significant is that, although such an international body might eventually develop, all attempts to establish such a rival body at Lausanne came to naught.

I personally welcomed the refreshing emphasis on faith, on Christ, the Spirit and prayer, proclaimed and evidenced at Lausanne. Their restatement of the centrality of the vertical is something that not only the liberals in the WCC but also those in the Catholic Church need to hear; but I wonder whether it would not be better for the evangelicals to make their point within rather than outside the WCC body.

Very Rev. John Husinsky, SVD.
Observer at the Congress.

PROTESTANT OVERSEAS MISSIONARIES

Though enthusiasm is hardly as epidemic as it was in the heyday of Protestant overseas missions in the 19th and early 20th centuries, there are probably more Protestant missionaries in the field today than ever before - more than 35,000 from North America, perhaps another 20,000 from other parts of the world. At the Lausanne conference the Rev. David Howard, missions director of U.S. Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, reported that the number of American students interested in foreign missions is unprecedented. Since last December, 1,000 student members of Inter-Varsity alone have signed pledge cards for overseas service, and 4,000 others said they would answer a call.

(from Time Magazine)

A WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES' RESPONSE TO LAUSANNE

I actually went to Lausanne with rather pessimistic expectations. Would the Congress not bring a new escalation in the "cold war" between "ecumenical" and "conservative evangelical" Christians? Would the world evangelical movement yield to a minority who had been promoting an apocalyptic anti-Christian image of the ecumenical movement.....I came away from Lausanne with hope and encouragement.... For those concerned with evangelism rather than with ecclesiastical warfare it should have been an experience of the variety and richness of the gifts of grace which God grants to his people.

There was room and freedom enough for Pentecostals and fundamentalists, for revivalists and cross-cultural missionaries, for church growth organizers and for those deeply concerned with the societal political implications of our faith.

Let me just very subjectively summarize what I personally found to be the most important trends in the Congress:

1. The Lausanne Congress has reaffirmed a critical openness towards the ecumenical movement which conciliar Christians should not interpret as mere diplomatic courtesy, but rather as a hand stretched out towards us. We should recognize that the brethren (by the way, I didn't see too many sisters in influential positions) who organized the Congress were courageous enough to risk a possible split in their own camp with those who had worked hard towards a public condemnation of the WCC.
2. The rejection of Pentecostalism (alongside the ecumenical movement) as it had turned up in some polemics against the Bangkok Conference of the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, has not survived Lausanne. World evangelicalism seems to have accepted the charismatic movements (of course as far as they are biblically based) as their own kin (as has the WCC).
3. There is a rapidly growing awareness of the socio-political implications of our Christian faith within the group represented at the Lausanne Congress. We ecumeniacs should be humble enough not to take this trend as a general justification of our own way - we should rather look out for ways of creative cooperation which God may want to open for us together.
4. The voices of Third World churches and their quest for identity could be clearly heard at Lausanne, though not yet as clearly as, say, in Bangkok. I dare to say that in this regard the ecumenical movement is still some big steps ahead of the evangelicals. Again, no reason for us to be complacent. We too, in spite of better theory (and perhaps some better practice), are still divided into donors and receivers. We should prepare the funeral of the Constantinian era together - or rather the new church after the funeral.
5. As could be expected, Lausanne has strengthened the evangelistic zeal of many people and, in the working papers, has given them practical methodological help on "how to do" evangelism. On this we have been weak in the ecumenical movement, mostly not because of lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the Word of God, but rather because we were, and still are, struggling with the question of how the "instruments" of evangelism - the churches, congregations, individual Christians - could back up their message by their lives and deeds in a world full of injustice and oppression.

Lausanne - in spite of a certain surface optimism - has clearly come to face this question too:

"A church which preaches the Cross must itself be marked by the Cross."

"The message of salvation implies also a message of judgement upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist."

"Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand."

"A reduction of foreign missionaries and money in an evangelized country may sometimes be necessary to facilitate the national church's growth in self-reliance and to release resources for unevangelized areas."

These are all quotations from "The Lausanne Covenant", the solemn declaration which was issued by the Congress at the end.

Real reconciliation is always costly. But Bangkok and Lausanne have prepared the ground for serious searching and wrestling for the truth together. Some cold warriors will remain in their trenches. But in Lausanne the spirit of urgency was conjured.

Gerhard Hoffmann

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AND LAUSANNE ON THE W.C.C.

"We and the World Council have very different viewpoints, and I don't see how they can be reconciled. Basic issues make for basic clashes. Big protests are not fashionable now, but the whole raison d'être of the congress reflects that the World Council is not giving the leadership it should on the central issue of expressing our faith. If there is no Gospel heart, there is no future for the church."

Theologian Kenneth Hamilton
of the United Church of Canada,
quoted by "Time".

A VERY CRITICAL REACTION FROM EXTREME EVANGELICALS (INCLUDING DR. CARL McINTIRE, A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF REV. IAN PAISLEY OF BELFAST FAME).

THE OCCASION FOR THIS Testimony has been the International Congress on Evangelism, Lausanne, Switzerland (July 16-25). It is so constituted under the control of the neo-evangelicals and so committed to a broad, inclusive, ecumenical, evangelism that this present challenge is in order from BIBLE BELIEVING individuals and churches...

TO JOIN HANDS WITH UNGODLY CLERGY TO PROMOTE EVANGELISM IS AN abomination to Moses of old who declared: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together." (Deut. 22:10) Jehovah of Israel refused to make common cause with Balaam. He emphasized, "I am a jealous God, and He commanded, "Thou shall have no other gods ." and Him Only shalt thou serve." To evangelize in these dark days with a visible church caught up on all manner of pagan doctrines and practices calls for the sternest of denunciation and the most penetrating exposure. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. 5:11) THERE IS ONLY ONE GOSPEL OF THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB; THERE IS ONLY ONE DOOR; (JN 10:9)

THE RISE OF THE SO CALLED SOCIAL GOSPEL, and there is no such gospel, has been a curse to the Church and an abomination to the Lord. Even to pretend that there is a second gospel is in defiance of the cross of Christ. The acceptance therefore of what is called personal salvation on one hand and social salvation on the other hand is a heresy of the 20th century and has ensnared many an evangelist. The substitution of the so called social gospel for the true gospel is deceiving many a soul.

EVANGELISM MUST NOT PUT NEW CONVERTS IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND LEAVE THEM TO THE MERCY OF A FALSE SYSTEM WITH FALSE DOCTRINES; Evangelism must not help build the World Council of Churches and the Babylon Church. Evangelism must not make common cause with the enemies of Christ any place, any time, or in any manner!!! Evangelism must not neutralize the people of God to Him, the Church, or in their stand for righteousness.

THE TAKING OF THE LIVES OF UNBORN BABIES BY THEIR PARENTS IN THE ACT OF ABORTION, CRIES TO GOD FOR JUDGEMENT AND MUST ALSO BE THE CONCERN OF THE EVANGELIST.

ECUMENICAL, NEO-EVANGELICAL, INCLUSIVE EVANGELISM HAS BEEN WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE OF GOD'S WORD, AND FOUND WANTING, BY THE COMMANDS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE!!!

L'EPISCOPAT FRANCAIS ET LE SYNODE DES EVEQUES

A Rome, en octobre prochain, 190 évêques vont se réunir en Synode. Ainsi, tous les trois ans, le Pape convoque et rassemble les délégués de toutes les Conférences épiscopales du monde. A l'ordre du jour de ces travaux, qui dureront un mois, une question et un sujet capital.

La question: En 1974, comment vont l'Eglise et le monde?

Il s'agit dans les premiers moments de la rencontre de dresser un large panorama de la situation mondiale, de faire un tour d'horizon. En effet, les évêques qui arriveront de tous les pays sont avant tout des pasteurs. Ils ne se réunissent pas en congrès d'études, ils n'entendent pas avoir réponse à tout. Ils veulent - tout d'abord, avec modestie - s'efforcer de placer l'univers des hommes au coeur de leur assemblée, au coeur de Rome. Le monde n'est pas fait pour l'Eglise ; c'est l'Eglise qui, par Dieu, est envoyée au monde pour son salut.

L'Evangélisation

Son salut: voilà bien le sujet du Synode.

En 1971, nous avons travaillé deux dossiers : le ministère des prêtres et la justice dans le monde. Cette concertation fut difficile, elle ne fut pas sans efficacité. Cette fois-ci, le Pape a tenu à aller à l'essentiel: l'évangélisation du monde contemporain.

Convertir les hommes - tous les hommes - à Jésus-Christ, c'est la vie même de l'Eglise catholique. C'est son acte de foi apostolique : et celui-ci la fait exister. Elle n'a pas d'autre finalité que la parole de son Maître au moment de retourner vers son Père: "Allez dans le monde entier, faites des disciples; baptisez-les au nom du Père du Fils et du Saint Esprit."

Alors que nous vivons une période d'intenses transformations, voire de bouleversements, les chrétiens doivent se rappeler qu'ils ne peuvent s'enfermer dans un ghetto, s'isoler ou se taire. Ils n'ont pas d'autre voie que celle de la fidélité, du risque et de l'aventure missionnaire. Une Eglise qui renoncerait à proposer - à ses risques et périls - son message perdrait sa vitalité et son avenir. Certes, sa mission n'est pas une conquête, mais un service. Celui de son fondateur, le Crucifié.

Les six aspects fondamentaux de la vie du monde retenus par les évêques français

Le Synode n'est pas un Concile. On ne refait pas Vatican II tous les trois ans. L'immense rassemblement conciliaire de tous les évêques du monde exerça, à l'invitation du Pape et avec lui, le gouvernement de l'Eglise universelle; il orienta son action. C'est pour la poursuivre et la mieux réaliser que le Synode fut institué, comme le Conseil du Pape, afin que, pour le service des hommes, l'Eglise vive au rythme du monde, s'émeuve de sa misère,

s'éveille, s'engage, se compromette... avec comme arme l'Évangile. L'Évangile seul.

C'est pourquoi il existe un préalable à cette réflexion des évêques sur l'évangélisation. Il leur faut saisir la photographie la meilleure possible du monde des spectateurs ou des photographes, mais des témoins et des acteurs qui veulent servir leurs frères et offrir le monde à Dieu.

Dans sa recherche des signes des temps qui s'imposent à la conscience chrétienne universelle. L'Épiscopat français a retenu six aspects fondamentaux de la vie de notre terre. Je les énumère rapidement:

- L'explosion démographique: montée des jeunes nations, montée des jeunes générations. En l'an 2000, les deux tiers de l'humanité auront moins de vingt cinq ans. (1)
- Le déplacement du centre socio-politique du monde vers l'Asie. La Chine, en l'an 2000, comptera autant d'hommes qu'aujourd'hui toute la terre. (2)
- La remise en cause des modèles de croissance occidentaux. Beaucoup sont fatigués du progrès économique, de la productivité, de l'efficacité, de la rentabilité. Ils cherchent à promouvoir comme premières valeurs le respect de la personne, la qualité de la vie, la créativité, la gratuité, le sens de la communion.(3)
- Le brassage des cultures sous l'influence des mass media et des voyages. La civilisation d'Occident, profondément marquée en ses racines et dans son expression par le Christianisme, devient une culture particulière; elle s'interroge sur sa capacité d'être universelle. (4)
- La remise en question des institutions de masse au profit des petits groupes.(5)
- Un besoin d'intériorité, de silence, voire de prière.(6)

A la suite de cette réflexion sur chacun de ces signes, une conviction s'est imposée aux évêques français: le Synode doit s'arrêter longuement sur l'évangélisation du monde des jeunes (les jeunes du monde entier, les jeunes nations, les jeunes Eglises). Dans un document envoyé au Secrétariat du Synode, ils ont exprimé le souhait de voir retenu ce thème parmi d'autres,

Je sais que dans l'Assemblée synodale un long moment sera réservé au partage et à l'échange. Je m'en réjouis, car c'est indispensable. Il est, en effet, important de prendre beaucoup de temps pour s'écouter, se confier expériences, réalisations, recherches et inquiétudes. Surtout nous, Occidentaux, vieillissant avec des siècles de christianisme et parfois inquiets de notre propre avenir, nous devons apprendre à nous taire, nous devons apprendre à bien dire, à notre place, la vie de nos Eglises locales.

Je supplie mes frères des jeunes Eglises de prendre la parole. C'est à eux de nous signifier la vigueur et la joie d'une évangélisation nouvelle.

REFERENCES(1) L'explosion démographique

On observe une montée des jeunes nations qui ont un taux élevé de natalité, et une montée des jeunes générations : en l'an 2000, sur 6 milliards d'hommes, près de 4 milliards auront moins de 25 ans. Cette explosion démographique entraîne des conséquences pour l'évangélisation : non seulement d'ordre quantitatif (le poids du nombre) mais aussi par le caractère radical des questions que les jeunes et les jeunes nations posent aujourd'hui collectivement.

(2) Le déplacement du centre sociopolitique du monde

Le centre du monde n'est plus l'Occident (élargi à l'Amérique du Nord), mais l'Asie (importance de la Chine) et l'Amérique du Sud. 60% de la population mondiale habitent, dès maintenant, en Asie. Il y aura, en l'an 2000, 3 778 millions d'habitants en Asie, c'est-à-dire plus que toute la terre n'en compte actuellement.

(3) La remise en cause générale des modèles de croissance que l'Occident a imposés au monde

Ces modèles sont aujourd'hui refusés par les peuples du tiers-monde et remis en question par l'Occident lui-même. Ils mettaient en valeur la productivité, l'efficacité, la croissance, la rentabilité, etc. On voit apparaître des requêtes pour de nouvelles valeurs : respect de la personne, créativité, gratuité, sens de la communion, liberté.

(4) Le brassage des cultures

Sous l'influence des mass média et des voyages, on assiste de plus en plus à un brassage des cultures :

- Dans les sociétés occidentales, il y a éclatement et supersposition de diverses cultures : la culture représentée par la vieille sagesse paysanne, la culture classique, la culture scientifique de type mathématique, la culture représentée par des sciences humaines, la culture ouvrière, la contre-culture de beaucoup de jeunes.

- Sur le plan international, c'est un brassage des cultures avec la découverte de la Chine, de l'Inde, de la négritude, des vieilles civilisations de l'Amérique latine. La culture occidentale n'est plus universalisable comme on a pu le croire; elle n'est qu'une culture particulière. En conséquence, se pose de plus en plus le problème du pluralisme.

(5) La remise en question généralisée des institutions

Toutes les institutions : famille, entreprise, nation, corps sociaux tels que l'armée, la magistrature, les professions sociales, etc., Eglise, sont remises en question.

L'autorité , les normes, les lois, sont objet de contestation... Ce phénomène s'explique par diverses influences. Nous relevons parmi elles le structuralisme et le nietzscheisme. En contrepartie de cette crise des institutions, se développe le phénomène des petits groupes, des petites communautés, qui expriment un "besoin de vivre".

(6) Un besoin d'intériorité

Nous croyons le percevoir à travers les faits suivants: la permanence du besoin religieux ; le besoin de merveilleux ; l'influence des mystiques orientales ; le retour de la prière ; la recherche du sens à donner à la vie personnelle et collective.

SOME CHRISTIAN RESOURCES FOR GENERAL EVANGELISM

We have received over 30 lists in 150 pages of resources of non-Catholic groups and organizations connected with evangelism throughout the world. The first list deals with General Evangelism. It is followed by separate ones on AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA, EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA, OCEANIA, each prefaced by a short summary on evangelism in each continent. Another set of lists concerns SOME CHRISTIAN RESOURCES FOR YOUTH EVANGELISM, again separately in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, North America and Oceania. A third set considers CHURCH GROWTH, in general, and in these continents, while a fourth one covers CHRISTIAN RESOURCES FOR BROADCASTING in AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA. A fifth set is concerned with BIBLE TRANSLATION AND DISTRIBUTION in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Other documents list specialists on Latin America, LITERACY PLUS EVANGELISM PROJECTS, and CHRISTIAN RESOURCES FOR LITERACY MINISTRIES, FILMS AND AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS, BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES and RECORDINGS, TAPES AND CASSETTES for Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Though systematically ignoring Catholic sources, these documents might be usefully consulted by anyone doing research work or simply interested in any of the topics covered. The lists have been produced for private circulation by MARC .

Fr. Leonzio Bano, FSCJ.

EVANGELIZATION: FACTS WHICH MATTER

1. In this issue of our weekly service, we reproduce the statement of the French Bishops prepared for the Synod. To them, one of the most important signs we ought to decipher in renewing our evangelization efforts, is that of the population explosion.

These last days (August 19-30) about 5000 people, representing 142 governments gathered in Bucharest for the UN Conference on World Population, the highlight of this Population Year - 1974. The message could not go unheeded by those concerned with evangelization today.

2. First of all three major, if indirect, lessons:
 - a) The UN has now become the most effective instrument for the Third World to express its aspirations. Bucharest comes after Stockholm (ecology), New York (energy and raw materials) and Caracas (marine resources). At each Conference Third World countries agreed on condemning the exploitation of their peoples by contemporary forms of colonialism.
 - b) The thesis comes out loud and clear: the disagreement between rich and poor countries now conditions every discussion of the future of Man and his Earth.
 - c) There seems to be no way out of this disagreement as long as the UN is conditioned by the interests of the Super powers and by the power struggle for "zones of influence".
3. And then the message about population explosion:
 - a) "Organic social, economic, industrial and scientific development is the best pill for the demographic problem". (I. BOYA, Senegal). The solution lies not in birth control but in social justice. The final document exhorts (i.e. does not bind, as the rich countries hoped) Third World governments to contain the annual birth rate at 3% and explicitly declares that only "a new world economic order" can resolve the problems of underdevelopment.

- b) Consequently, the excessive birth rates are no longer seen as the causes of economic backwardness. A world policy of birth control would only stabilize current inequalities.
- c) Development is not just a case of an increase in production. It is the outcome of a different relationship among economic forces. It is a political, not a technical problem. The capitalist system was rationalizing current relationships through a territorial division of labour - using the draft plan proposed to the Conference.
- d) Birth control looks different from these territories: In Asia, where the ratio population - resources is already unbalanced, it assumes a different meaning from that prevalent in Africa and Latin America, where this ratio is good. "It is above all on the side of the rich countries that the birth rate and consumption must be reduced."
- e) Our current Catholic thought - that the definitive solution must be found in world social justice rather than in mere brakes - was thus with the majority in Bucharest.
- f) But the passage from thought to action is as problematic as ever: the establishment of the "new economic order" requires a firm political will - which the Superpowers and the Third World, for various but converging reasons, still lack. The Third World countries do not want to rock the boat of their present social structures. The Superpowers either protect the multinationals and thus inhibit the autonomous development of local economies (USA), or else, protect their present spheres of influence against this capitalist strategy (USSR-CHINA).

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