



WHAT IS 'CONSCIENTISATION'?by Paulo Freire of the WCC Education Department, Geneva

A discussion of conscientisation calls for a number of preliminary remarks, and I would like to begin today by explaining where that great mouthful of a word came from.

Many people, especially in Latin America and the United States, insist that I invented that strange word, because it is a central idea in my thoughts on education? But I didn't. The word was born during a series of round table meetings of professors at the Brazilian Institute of Higher Studies, ISEB, which was created after the 'liberating' revolution of 1964, under the wing of the Ministry of Education. The word was thought up by some of the professors there, but I really can't remember who. Anyway, it all came out of our group reflections. I recall, among others who met there with us, Prof. Alvaro Pinto, a philosopher who wrote Science and National Reality, and more recently, Science, Awareness and Existence. There was also a sociologist Professor Guerreiro, who is at present at the University of California.

I used to compare notes regularly with all of them and it was at the ISEB that for the first time I heard the word 'conscientisation'. As soon as I heard it, I realised the profundity of its meaning since I was fully convinced that education, as an exercise in freedom, is an act of knowing, a critical approach to reality. It was inevitable, then, that the word became part of the terminology I used thereafter to express my pedagogical views, and it easily came to be thought of as something I had created. Helder Camara was the one who popularised the term and gave it currency in English. Thus, thanks to him rather than to me, the word caught on in Europe and in the United States.

In 1965 I wrote an article for the review Civilisation et Développement called 'Education and Conscientisation'. But it was Helder Camara who, as I have said, in his wanderings around the world, popularised the word so that it is as commonplace today in the United States, where a great number of articles are being written about conscientisation. None the less, I am more and more convinced that the word should really be used in its Brazilian form, conscientização, and spelled that way. That is why I entitled an article I recently wrote in English 'The Conscientização Process', not 'The Conscientisation Process'.

What is conscientisation? I have noticed that conscientisation is frequently taken to be synonymous with the French expression prise de conscience, yet the two must be carefully distinguished. To show why, let me define the scope of each of them. As a matter of fact, conscientisation is possibly only because prise de conscience is possible. If men were not able to become, there wouldn't be any conscientisation. What then is conscientisation?

One of the distinguishing traits of man is that only he can stand off from the world and the reality of things around him. Only man can stand at a distance from a thing and admire it. As they objectivise or admire a thing (admire is taken here in the philosophical sense of admiring, looking at), men are able to act consciously on the objectivised reality. That, precisely, is the human praxis, man's action-reflection on the world, on reality. And yet, in their approach to the world, men have a preliminary moment in which the world, the objective reality, doesn't yet come to them as a knowable object of their critical consciousness. In other words, in their spontaneous approach to the world, men's moral, basic attitude is not a critical, but an ingenuous one.

Not that there is no knowledge of reality at this spontaneous stage, but what we don't have yet is a critical attitude. There is one kind of perception of reality that gives us a real, if limited, knowledge of it: the Greeks called it doxa (mere opinion, or belief). Knowledge that stays at the level of mere doxa and goes no further to the level of a task (the reality's reason for being, as Mao Tse-tung would say) never becomes full knowledge; it is not a logos of reality.

To become aware, then, all it takes is to be a man. All it takes to be a man is to seize reality in the dialectical relations that flow between man and the world, the world and man; those relations are so intimate that we shouldn't really talk about man and the world, but just about man, or perhaps world-man. The first level of apprehension of reality is what the French mean by prise de conscience. The taking awareness of reality exists precisely because, as situated beings--closed beings in Gabriel Marcel's words--men are with and in the world, gazing at it.

This prise de conscience is not yet conscientisation, however. Conscientisation is a prise de conscience that goes deeper, it is the critical development of a prise de conscience. Hence, conscientisation implies going beyond the spontaneous phase of apprehension of reality to a critical phase, where reality becomes a knowable object, where man takes an epistemological stance and tries to know. Thus conscientisation is a probing of the ambience of reality. The more a person conscientises himself, the more he unveils reality and gets at the phenomonic essence of the object he stands in front of, to analyse it. For that same reason, conscientisation without a praxis, i.e. without action-reflection as two paired, dialectised elements permanently constituting that special way of being the world (or transforming it) is peculiar to man.

#### HISTORICAL COMMITMENT

Conscientisation is then commitment in time. In fact there is no conscientisation without historical commitment. So that conscientisation is also a historical awareness. It is a critical insertion into history. It means that men take on a role as subjects making the world, remaking the world; it asks men to fashion their existence out of the material that life offers them. The more they are conscientised, the more they exist.

The mere fact of finding oneself oppressed will move a step ahead and become a process of liberation only if this discovery leads to a historical commitment that means an involvement. For involvement is more than commitment: it is a critical insertion into history in order to create it, to mould it. And so when an oppressed individual sees he is oppressed, if he does not set out to do something to transform the concrete oppressing reality, he is not historically committed, and thus he is not really conscientised.

Conscientisation implies then that when I realise that I am oppressed, I also know I can liberate myself if I transform the concrete situation where I find myself oppressed. Obviously, I can't transform it in my head: that would be to fall into the philosophical error of thinking that awareness 'creates' reality. I would be decreeing that I am free, by my mind. And yet the structures would continue to be the same as ever--so that I wouldn't be free. No, conscientisation implies a critical insertion into a process, it implies a historical commitment to make changes. That is why conscientisation bids us to adopt a utopian attitude towards the world, an attitude that turns the one conscientised into a utopian agent. Before going any further, let me explain what I mean by that word utopian.

For me utopian does not mean something unrealisable, nor is it idealism. Utopia is the dialecticalisation in the acts of denouncing and announcing--denouncing the dehumanising structure and announcing the structure that will humanise. Hence it is also a historical commitment. A utopia supposes that we know critically. It is an act of knowledge. For I cannot denounce the dehumanising structure unless I get at it and know it. Nor can I announce, either, unless I know. But--this is important--between the moment of an announcement and the accomplishment of it there is a great difference: the announcement is not the announcement of a project, but of an ante-project. Because the ante-project becomes a project only through a historical praxis. Besides, between the ante-project and the moment of accomplishment, or concretising the project, a period intervenes that we call historical commitment. For this reason, only utopians--and revolutionaries too, to the extent that they are utopians (what was Marx but a utopian? what was Che Guevara if not a utopian?)--can be prophetic and hopeful.

Only those who announce and denounce, who are permanently committed to a radical process of transforming the world so that men can be more, only they can be prophetic. Reactionary people, oppressors cannot be utopian, they cannot be prophetic, and because they cannot be prophetic they cannot have hope.

What future has the oppressor but to preserve his present status as oppressor? What scope for denouncing can oppressors have, other than the denunciation of those who denounce them? What do oppressors have to announce but the announcement of their myths? And what can be the hope of those who have no future?

I see a great possibility here for a theology, the utopian theology of hope. The utopian posture of the denouncing, announcing, historically committed Christians who are convinced that the historical vocation of men is not to adapt, not to bend to pressures, not to spend 90 per cent of their time making concessions in order to salvage what we call the historical vocation of the Church. We humans have an unbelievable vocation, and we cannot jeopardize it for any one fact, nor can we compromise it for any single, isolated problem, because the church has the whole world. Why then risk one's entire historical task over any single fact? That would be, not to be utopian, but to be Machiavellian. It would be to concede, and to forfeit one's soul in the concession.

Conscientisation clearly has to do with utopia. The more we are conscientised, the more we become, by the commitment that we assume to change things, announcers and denouncers. This commitment ought to be permanent, though, because if after denouncing a dehumanising structure and announcing a more human one, after committing ourselves to the reality (after all, the project is going to be accomplished only if we work at it), after understanding the project and being convinced of its importance (being conscientised about it), if we were then to stop being utopian, we would simply bureaucratise ourselves. This is the danger inherent in any revolution, once it ceases to be permanent. One masterly way to avoid that danger is by a cultural revolution, that dialecticalisation which has no yesterday, today or tomorrow and which avoids becoming static because it is an ongoing effort for change.

That's what conscientisation is: a seizing of reality; and for that very reason, for the very utopian strain that permeates it, we can call it a reshaping of reality. Conscientisation demythologises. Obvious and impressive as the fact may be, an oppressor

can never conscientise for liberation. (How would I possibly demythologise if I am an oppressor?) A humanising endeavour can only be an endeavour to demythify. Conscientisation then is the most critical approach to reality, stripping it down so as to get to know the myths that deceive and perpetuate the dominating structure.

One might protest: 'But how can we ever find the process, the how of conscientisation?' The how of it brings up an important point, one that seems to me to be the essential difference between education as a means of domination and education as a means of liberation. An education that is used to domesticate merely transfers knowledge, as the educator passes on his thirst for knowing to his pupils, who passively, receive that knowledge. In that sort of relationship, conscientisation is impossible. We can see a certain incipient conscientisation in it, though, despite that education, in the way the students react, because the natural intentionality of human awareness cannot be thwarted by any educator's domesticating process.

A conscientising--and therefore--liberating--education is not that transfer of neatly wrapped knowledge; it is the true act of knowing. Through it, both teacher and pupils simultaneously become knowing subjects, brought together by the object they are knowing. There is no longer one who thinks, who knows, standing in front of others who admit they don't know, that they have to be taught. Rather, all of them are inquisitive learners, avid to learn.

#### EDUCATION AND FREEDOM

Those who propagate the superstructure's myths are, equivalently, bringing the superstructure itself right too. In any serious changeover, such as a revolution, the myths from the previous structure will carry over and continue to influence the new governmental structure. Unless we critically grasp this fact, we will never understand how, even after an infrastructure has been changed, people will continue to think as they did before.

An understanding of this dialect and this sort of subdetermination (which Marx certainly had) will persuade us that a mechanistic view of social changes is no good. Someone with a mechanistic approach would expect that if the infrastructure were changed, the superstructure would automatically be changed too--but that is not what happens. That was the problem that baffled Lenin after the Soviet Revolution: Stalin wrestled with it--and solved it finally by shooting down the peasants. It is the dilemma facing Fidel Castro today with his peasants, though it is not so crucial for him. It is also the problem that Mao Tse-tung had and has, but he came up with the most genial solution of the century: China's cultural revolution.

What is cultural action? What is a cultural revolution? In generic terms, but in the good sense of the phrase, it is the way we culturally attack culture. It means that we see culture always as a problem and do not let it become static, becoming a myth and mystifying us.

Whereas education, in practice, too often merely inverts the praxis and domesticates students by pumping myths into them. Education for freedom, on the other hand, strives to expose that inversion of praxis at the moment it occurs, so that it will not take place. A noble objective, indeed. But how do we do it? As we turn our attention to see our misdirected praxis, we fix our eyes on, as the object of our knowledge, that domesticating capability of an inversion of praxis, the very prostituting of our transforming action? At that moment our act of knowing illuminates the action that is the source of our knowing. And right here we have the permanent, constant, dynamic of our attitude toward culture itself.

Otherwise we risk falling into an elitist position, hence one that is neither liberating nor human, nor humanising. But even supposing that we avoid that pitfall, how are we to undertake a programme of cultural action, or of education for freedom, when we know that people are all the while being dominated through the so-called mass media--which are really means for sending messages rather than communicating, for propagandising and domesticating rather than for liberating. We must save that word from the distortion being done to it. The term communications media is being made to cover a wholesale invasion by slogans. But communications is not sloganising. It is something completely different. As all of us recognise, cultural action for freedom is ultimately a kind of action.

Let's turn for a moment to the desperate situation of the peasants in north-east Brazil. Their awareness of what is going on is so primitive that they are wholly unable to get a structural view of the reality. They are incapable of envisaging their plight as a result, in the world they live in. Yet even a peasant is a man, and any man wants to explain the reality around him. How can he? one might ask. What reasons can he find? How does his dulled brain conceive his wretched lot? Normally, he will try to size up the situation. He will look for the causes, the reasons for his condition, in things higher and more powerful than man. One such thing is God, whom he sees as the maker, the cause of his condition. Ah, but if God is responsible, man can do nothing. Many Christians today, thanks be to God, are vigorously reacting against that attitude, especially in Brazil. But as a child, I knew many priests who went out to the peasants saying: 'Be patient. This is God's will. And anyway, it will earn heaven for you'. Yet the truth of the matter is that we have to earn our heaven here and now. We have to build our heaven, to fashion it during our lifetime, right now. Salvation is something to achieve, not just to hope for. This later sort of theology is a very passive one that I cannot stomach.

How could we make God responsible for this calamity? As if Absolute Love could abandon man to constant victimisation and total destitution. That would be a God as described by Marx.

Whenever men make God responsible for intolerable situations, for oppression, then the dominating structures help to popularise that myth. If God is not the cause, they whisper, then destiny must be. Human reason at this level easily becomes fatalistic; it sits back and sighs: 'Nothing can be done about it'. Sometimes another scapegoat is found, and it too is a myth spread by the dominating structure: the helplessness of the oppressed. The dominated mind looks inward and decided that it is totally unable to cope with its misery: it concludes that it is impotent. A Presbyterian clergyman from the United States once told me that the whites in his country say God made the blacks inferior. It was a fine example of what the author of the book Picture of the Colonised Contrasted with the Picture of the Coloniser meant when he wrote: 'The oppressor always draws a picture of the oppressed'. For the oppressed mind in its desperate plight, I repeat, there seems to be nothing that can be done.

For the critical mind that conscientises itself, beyond this situation there is the future, what we must do, the thing we must create, the historical futurity we have to bring into being; and to do that, we must change whatever it is that prevents the humanisation of our fellow men.

As we examine the structures and the reasons why they are so intolerable, as we expose the oppressive situation, we are forced to a decision: we either commit ourselves or we don't--but we will have to answer to our consciences for our choice. The process of conscientisation leaves no one with his arms folded. It makes some unfold their arms. It leaves others with a guilt feeling, because conscientisation shows us that God wants us to act.

As I conscientise myself, I realise that my brothers who don't eat, who don't laugh, who don't sing, who don't love, who live oppressed, crushed and despised lives, are suffering because of some reality that is causing all this. And at that point I join in the action historically by loving genuinely, by having the courage to commit myself (which is no easy thing!) or I end up with a sense of guilt because I am not doing what I know I should. That guilt feeling rankles in me, it demands rationalisations to 'gratify' myself (the term is used here in the psychological sense). A North American theologian has called those rationalisations 'fake generosity' because to escape my guilt feelings I go in for philanthropy. I seek compensation by almsgiving, I send a cheque to build a church, I make contributions: land for a chapel or a priory for nuns, hoping in that way to buy peace. But peace cannot be purchased, it is not for sale; peace has to be lived. And I can't live my peace without commitment to men, and my commitment to men can't exist without their liberation, and their liberation can't exist without the final transformation of the structures that are dehumanising them.

#### FEAR OF FREEDOM

In the seminars that I have given in various countries it is very interesting to observe how two attitudes are produced. Often I am violently assailed because many people, when they hear me start to despise themselves--and their almost immediate second reaction is to strike back at whoever made them do that. Observing this process can be extremely interesting.

A similar process takes place with very simple people, too. Many of them run away from freedom. Oppression is so potent a thing that it produces fear of freedom. That fear crops up whenever any discussion or even mention of freedom makes them already feel it as a threat. But freedom isn't something that is given. It is something that is very arduous, because nobody gives freedom to anyone else, no one frees another, nobody can even free himself; men free themselves only by mutual planning, by collaborating on something wrong that they want to correct. There is an interesting theological parallel to this: no one saves another, no one saves himself, because only in communion can we save ourselves--or not save ourselves. You don't save me, because my soul, my being, my conscious body is not something that A or B can save. We work out our salvation in communion. Each one of us must set out in quest of his salvation, we must do it ourselves. I don't mean that God hasn't saved us by His presence in history: I'm talking now on the human level.

Conscientisation demands an Easter. That is it demands that we die to be born again. Every Christian must live his Easter, and that too is utopia. The man who doesn't make his Easter, in the sense of dying in order to be reborn, is no real Christian. That is why Christianity is, for me, such a marvellous doctrine. People have accused me of

HOW THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS CAN HELP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIAN CHURCH

by Fr. Engelbert Zeitler, SVD

1. A Joint Mission Commission of the CRI

The first proposal I would like to make, is to establish without delay a Joint Mission Commission of the Conference of Religious India (CRI), for both men and women. This should have a strong coordination with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) Commission on Church Extension; some may even wish to see it finally merge with the CBCI Commission on Missions. The CRI Commission's role must be subsidiary and one of service. One of its prime goals should be missionary up-dating of its own members, the religious of India, certainly a force to be reckoned with, and the missionary training of the laity under its care, e.g. in the numerous schools conducted by religious.

2. A Thinking Cell

Mission work, in particular here in India, is today a much more complicated and complex affair that it used to be for a saint like St. Francis Xavier. What we, therefore, need is a thinking cell, a planning commission or whatever you call it. Be sure, it will not be a control tower. It will be just a service organisation to help those charged with a heavy responsibility for the missions to reflect and plan their policies better since at present they are so taken up by administrative work and travelling that they hardly have the time to devote themselves to their basic duty. This thinking cell would have to comprise not only theologians but also social scientists, missiologists and people who know the India of today from their actual dealing with concrete problems and not those who merely theorise from their desks.

3. A Missionary Training Department

What is required is a kind of crash program to make the whole CRI and all its sections aware of what is going on in the missionary endeavour of the Church today. This program should reach to all levels, from the superiors down to the last members. It should penetrate into our training institutions and to the rank and file of people we deal with for we often find that in these areas the mission spirit is as rarified as oxygen on the moon. This training department would have to work out systematic crash programs of missionary and missiological training at all levels and integrate the new insights into our training institutions, in particular greater emphasis must be given for religious and laity alike in our training and ongoing formation programs to human development (promotio humana), which is an integral but unfortunately much neglected part of our missionary vocation. This training department would also have to fulfill another even more important task, namely to work out long-term plans for the deployment of our missionary personnel, a task that has been proposed time and time again but has never been taken up seriously by anybody. An organisation like the CRI would be in a position to do this service to the Church in India.



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being a communist, but no communist could say what I have just said. I never had any temptation to cease being, to cease existing. The reason is that I am not yet completely a Catholic, I just keep on trying to be one more completely day after day. The condition of being is to go on being.

Conscientisation could never be an imposition on others or a manipulation of them. I cannot impose my opinions on someone else. I can only invite him to share, to discuss. To impose on others my way of not being would be a real contradiction. For loving is not only a free act, it is an act for freedom. And love that cannot produce more freedom is not love.

#### 4. A Research Department

No factory that hopes to have a long life expectancy can afford today to concentrate only on producing those realities that can be measured and accounted for in definite figures of cash. They all have to concentrate on their research department and some of the more successful ones spend considerable amounts of money and in particular employ some of their best brains for research without considering it a loss. On the contrary, they see it as their wisest and best investment. Here again, I believe, the Church and in particular the CRI could learn a lesson from secular efficiency. We, too, need a research department that goes into the immense problems of our religious life and of our missionary vocation in the India of today in all its aspects and ramifications.

Therefore, this research department, whatever shape and form it would take, should comprise a theological, missiological, sociological and anthropological sector, and could be combined with efforts already being made elsewhere, e.g. at the National Vocation Service Centre.

So far the CRI, both men and women largely consider personnel "frozen" in ecclesiastical research a liability and have a marked tendency to employ their best people in the administration of their own congregations with the result that we as a whole are sadly lacking in originality and creativity.

#### 5. A Missiological Department and Institute

As soon as possible the anomaly should be removed that the biggest mission country of the Catholic Church has not one single missiological department or institute and not even a research and documentation centre for the missions. At the international theological conference in Nagpur which for the first time gathered international experts with Indians outside the western cultural ambient surprise was expressed by more than one of the foreign experts about this fact. The National Vocation Service Centre in collaboration with the Mission Commission of the CBCI is intending to do the preliminary work precisely for building up such a centre. The mission interest of the CRI can easily be gauged by its involvement in this very practical venture.

#### 6. Experimentation Centres

Ideas have to be tested, in the field of science as well as in the field of organisation and even in the domain of the spirit. The new missionary situation in India calls for new approaches which should be tested in small experimentation centres. E.g. the time for the classic big mission stations, a remnant of the colonial period, is evidently running out and the need of the hour might be the cell system so successfully used by the communists. Could we have such centres adapted for instance to the traditional genius of the ashrams? The various congregations would have to widen their horizons and their hearts to allow their members to experiment along given lines, whenever they discern such a charism in one of them. This, naturally, would also call for inter-congregational cooperation, perhaps even common living during a limited time, since the efforts of scattered individuals may not be so fruitful unless they were supported by larger groups.

#### 7. Strategic Regrouping of Our Headquarters

The last Pakistan war was effectively conducted because the headquarters of the armed forces was not somewhere in South India but close to the frontiers. Here, too, I think we could learn something from secular efficiency. Most of our religious headquarters are concentrated in areas already heavily congested with religious establishments while vast tracts of the country are still empty. Why can we not concentrate on these underdeveloped areas

When it comes to opening a new house? Moreover, the headquarters of the provincials are often so far away from the mission fields that one easily understands, already from the physical distance, their virtual absence from the vital work of the missions which does not concern many major superiors very much. Bangalore has for example 19 provincials and covers with its ecclesiastical possessions in the 6 miles stretch from St. John's Medical College beyond the city, 1/4 (another expert told me 1/3) of all the available land. The capital, Delhi has only two major superiors of women and there are a number of state capitals in the North that have not even one. Admittedly it will not be easy to get a foothold in many such cities but it would bring all these major superiors who move there much more down to earth and closer to the realities actually faced by the Church, than they are aware of presently. This would be a blessing for which we could only thank the Lord. But will the superiors really, in any case, be adequately remunerated? That's the \$4,000 dollar question.

### 9. Practical Program

The plan can evidently not do the work alone. It is not even supposed to take the lead in any of the points raised above, since they belong primarily to the jurisdiction of the bishops. The CRI will, however, definitely have the lion's share as far as the practical work is concerned. For this purpose we need a Mission Group with the most relevant and most important commissions of the CRI, in particular with the Commission on Development, Justice and Peace, the Commission on Dialogue, the Commission for Mass Media and also all the Mission Commissions. The CRI should also have the link that is missing at present with the laity. It is through and with the laity that we shall fulfill our missionary task and not in carrying out an enterprise ourselves so as to motivate it as a private vineyard of the Lord.

### 10. Final Preparations for the National Consultation

As outlined above, the national event that is going to take place in October should revolve around all missionary efforts in India in the light of Christ's revelation in which we are the first fruit of the time which has written on the walls of our modern Indian structures the word of the universal process we would need a good deal of cooperation, both in terms of personnel and money, also from the CRI. I am opposed to the idea that national consultations have to be financed only from sources abroad.

### 10. Final Preparations for the Missionary Program for the Synod

As outlined above, an immense work has to be done, if the Synod is to be fruitful so that India can make its legitimate and expected contribution to the mission which the Church universal has to fulfill. A number of issues that have been outlined above should be followed up in close collaboration with the CBCI and all organisations that are concerned with the mission of the Church in India today and tomorrow.

### CONCLUSION

I would conclude with the words of the new Director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches in which he summed up the recent conference in Bangalore: "We have heard harsh words on the missionary enterprise. But now we must hear the word--it is theological reflection. The affirmation of African culture, the convalescing of Indian spirituality, the challenge to social revolution are the starting points for a new day in world mission. The cry for help from brothers and sisters in Europe, the expression of concern for world mission by delegates of socialist countries invite us to respond. Our mood should not be frustration but anticipation. . . We are at the end of an era and at the very beginning of the World Mission."

OBLATE SEMINAR ON ISLAM -- SINGAPORE, MARCH 1975

Singapore is the meeting place of South-East Asian trade and commerce--a modern, cosmopolitan, developing, gigantic city where East and West, Cathay and Europa jostle for dominance. Singapore is an excellent place for meetings, and the recent Oblate Seminar on Islam took place there from March 17 to 22.

The Seminar was part of the effort being made in the Asian Region, under the auspices of the Asian Inter-Provincial Conference, to group together missionaries from the base involved in similar ministries. The first Seminar of this kind took place in Colombo in July 1974 and was concerned with dialogue with Buddhism. The Singapore meeting in Islam was the second in the series.

Members

Delegates to the meeting came from all parts of Asia where Oblates are engaged in work with Islam: Fathers Theogenes JOSEPH (Pakistan), Martin QUERE and Michael RODRIGO (Sri Lanka), Yves CAROFF (Malaysia), David SHELTON (Indonesia), Gerard RIXHON, José ANTE and Ruben GOMEZ (Philippines).

Fr. Dalston FORBES, General Councillor for Asia and Executive Secretary of the Asian Provincials' Conference, was present for the whole Seminar. Fr. Michael Fitzgerald, White Fathers, Rector of the Pontifical Institute of Arabic Studies, Rome, gave one of the key talks on "Principles of Islamic-Christian Dialogue" and acted as an expert to the Seminar. Similarly Dr. Peter Gowing, Church of Christ, Director of the Dansalan Research Centre, Marawi City, Philippines, delivered a learned paper on "Past and Present Patterns of Muslim-Christian Relation in Insular South-East Asia." Dr. Gowing also played an important part in the activities of the Seminar and contributed powerfully with his vast knowledge of Islam in South-East Asia and the Middle East.

Invitees and friends came for parts of the proceedings. These included Dr. A. Fleming (St. Andrew's University, Scotland), Dr. Guy Garret (Trinity College, Singapore), Dr. A. Hassan and Dr. Philip Motha (University of Singapore).

Order of Work

The Seminar followed hard on the heels of two other important Muslim-Christian encounters: The Cordoba Congress of September 1974, organised by the Association for Islamic-Christian Friendship in Spain, and the Hong Kong Conference of January 1975, summoned by the Christian Conference of Asia. The delegates were thus able to adapt the resolutions of these two meetings to their own missionary situations.

The Seminar began with Dr. Gowing's talk on the history of Islamic-Christian relations in South-East Asia. This was followed by factual reports on missionary service to Islamic communities in all the Oblate missions.

Then came the talk of Fr. Fitzgerald on "Principles of Dialogue with Islam." After a question period, the delegates went on to the main item on the agenda: a study of replies to a questionnaire which had been sent out to all Oblate communities involved in Islamic work, as a preparation for the Seminar.

The discussions that ensued around the questionnaire proved most useful. They were in the nature of a conscientisation of the group to certain problems and an informative process as delegates learned about different models of dialogue and cooperation with Islam that are already practised.

Outcome

The final outcome of the seminar will be a Report on the discussions; it will be sent to all delegates and should help our mission communities in an updated and more dialogic rapport with Islam.

On the last day of the Seminar the participants accepted the following guidelines for mission in Islamic countries. They are presented here for the benefit of readers throughout the world.

### Guide Lines For Ministry In Islamic Countries

#### Dialogue

1. Dialogue is a sharing of understanding and experience; it is a method of developing self-knowledge; it is a mode of discourse with the neighbor, a mode of discourse between individuals and communities. Dialogue should not be confined to religious men and women. It is not a cold study, nor is it limited to cognition or the comparison of sets of beliefs; it is a process of increasing understanding; it can be both critical and appreciative. In short it is an exchange between people, not an exchange between systems. Dialogue is a sober, rational, humble, and appreciative approach. It is a means of sensitizing people of various backgrounds to each other's growing and of bringing them to a common concern as regards human problems.

Dialogue means an opening to truth, a conversion to truth, a common search for truth in its totality. It is the altruistic arm of Islam and Christianity.

2. It seems to us that the dialogic relationship is the best way to describe the web of relations that should prevail between our Christian communities and the neighbouring Islamic communities, on the personal, local, regional and national levels.

Far from being a betrayal of the missionary task, dialogue is an integral and basic element of our missionary task.

3. Dialogue should not be restricted to the elite groups, to the educated but should be fostered where possible even at the grass roots level. For this an educative process of both Christians and Muslims is required.

4. Muslims seek to submit wholeheartedly, as did Abraham, to the will of God (Allah). Christians pray and strive that God's will be done, his Kingdom come. We feel that Christians and Muslims can help one another in discerning God's will and responding to it.

#### Presence

5. Being present with Islam in a spirit of service and mutual understanding commends itself as an eminently suitable way of witnessing as Christians in Islamic countries. This involves witnessing in society to the highest and best in our religion by the example of our personal way of life, behaviour and worship. It also involves us in engaging in a spirit of goodwill in discussion with interested Muslims about the teachings of their faith and of our faith, with the purpose of being "evangelised" by the riches of Islam while presenting the patrimony of the Christian message.

The only conversion we seek is the conversion of all, Moslems and Christians alike, to God's will as he has made it known in the sacred scriptures of our two kindred communities of faith.

#### Areas of Cooperation

6. Common action with our Muslim brothers and sisters is seen as feasible and necessary in the areas of economic and social action, of development and human liberation, of culture and common praise of God. In all these areas we should act in a spirit of friendship, avoiding rivalry and a patronizing and condescending attitude, aiming at welcoming initiatives from the Muslim side as well.

7. In every possible way, we will work with our Muslim friends on a footing of equality in striving with them to bring about social justice in our communities at all levels; we shall work with them for justice on the international scale when our religious and social awareness prompts us to do so.

8. We find that our missionary work as a ministry of presence and service in the manner sketched above is clearly and definitely an Oblate endeavour, falling within the scope of our missionary vocation as detailed by the Chapter of 1972. \*\*\* While many of us could include this type of concern in our general missionary and pastoral service, some

AFRICAN TRADITION AND "IMPORTED RELIGION."

The April 1975 issue of "Rencontre", a periodical for priests and religious in Ivory Coast, publishes the integral text of a conference given in Abidjan by Father Isadore de Souza, Director of the Nigher Institute for Religious Worship (I.S.C.R.). A speaker asks the question: "Can we remain Africans whilst being members of a so-called imported religion?" Admitting the problem, Father de Souza affirms: "We are African with all it implies on the level of psychology, wisdom, philosophy, the understanding of the visible and invisible world in our own African way. But at the same time, we have been moulded in another culture, a foreign one, which has marked us and sticks to our skin. Two men are practically living in us: the African and the Western." He then asks: "Is it possible to reconcile these two realities? Are we torn between these two poles or must we eliminate one of these two elements?"

Firstly, Father de Souza tries to show exactly what the division consists of. Traditional Africa, he says, was not a religious void. It had its own religious life, its way of entering into dialogue with the divinity. At a certain moment of its history, it underwent the intrusion of other religions: Islam forced its way into Africa and grew in the 9th, 10th and 12th centuries with the domination of the Almoravids; a good number of our countries and regions have had Christianity but for 30, 50, 75 or 100 years. However, if we refer to the flourishing Churches of Cairo, Carthage and Alexandria, we must recognise that in Africa Christianity existed before Islam, which has only been able to spread and then advance in sub-Saharan Africa after the fall of Carthage in 697. It is also true that Christianity in Black Africa started timidly only in the 15th century to see its implantation. It is understandable then that it is considered as a foreign religion. But why do Islam and Christianity cause a certain division among us Africans? Father de Souza affirms: "The crux of the problem is of a psychological order, the bases of which are to be found in the historical phenomenon of colonisation and decolonisation!" In fact, the advent of Islam as well as of Christianity is closely linked with colonisation. And in this we must find the psychological problem. This must be clearly seen without minimising the unfortunate effects and without ignoring the happy consequences for Africa as a result of colonisation, Islam and Christianisation.

In the name of a political assimilation, an effort was made to depersonalise the Africans. But the African cannot accept this. This resistance forms the essential element of the mental decolonisation of the negritude movement, of the fight for political independence, of economic decolonisation, in one word, the recovery of the African identity and personality. Yet whilst recognising African values, the African must also be aware of the fact that other civilisations have contributed something to them.

Father de Souza then says: "Have we, by our fidelity to Africa and by our concern for the recovery of our personality, to undermine the so-called imported religions, or does the necessity of our insertion into the modern world lead to another solution?" This is the theme of the second part: "How do we solve our mental confusion?"

The first generation of Muslims and Christians found a solution. They chose for Islam or Christianity above the traditional religions, because they had faith, they had seen the credibility of the imported religions, and because they considered the white man as superior. Most of the converts, however, did not feel altogether at ease. They were offered two possibilities: either to remain sincere and faithful Christians and to cut themselves more or less off from their community, or to live a double life, Christian on the surface and pagan in depth. The division did not disappear and the problem remains. A second solution took the place of the first.

Some Africans rejected the imported religions, some out of fidelity to ancestral traditions, others out of dislike of anything imported. But this approach does not solve the problem either. The director of the ISCR explains: "I recognise the difficulty of our political, ideological, psychological and economic liberation. I voluntarily take part in the rediscovery of our identity and our personality, but we must not be blind. Whether we like it or not, entering into dialogue with the other continents constitutes a fact we cannot delete at a stroke. Neither the African past nor the Western past interest me. Africans or Asians, Europeans or Americans, our preoccupation must be with the present and the future. Certainly, our past must be taken into account, but this only to find in it the elements which will enable us to build the present and the future. At present the world, on account of the fantastic development of mass media, is tending to become a small village. We live close together with all the civilisations of the world.

"We revolt against colonialism and imperialism and with reason, yet we live as capitalists. We say no to the West, and justly so, but we say it in a western way. We reject the capitalist ideology so as to import the Marxist ideology. We speak of authenticity and we act anti-African. Not one country is able to have a national self-sufficiency. We irresistibly tend towards the universalisation of the world.

"The traditional religions could adjust to the structures of yesterday's Africa, but are they still viable in present day Africa? The dilemma has not been solved, and a third solution must be sought." The speaker then set aside consideration of Islam as he did not know this so well, and tried to answer the question: "Why does Christianity appear to us to be an imported religion?"

"The evangelical message has been transmitted in a western coating. The catechism imposed on the African has been thought out and taught on the basis of a Western philosophy. The liturgical expression has but been a transposition of the western liturgy. In the mind of the African, Christianity becomes identified with western culture. Nothing is less true, however. Since Vatican II, everything has fortunately changed. It has been urged that in every socio-cultural area theological reflection be encouraged and submitted to a new examination. Particular traditions and qualities belonging to each family of nations must be assumed into the Christian unity. And here we find the possibility of a reconciliation of the evangelical message with the cultures of each country. The Gospel is not western. Christ was born a Jew, steeped in Jewish culture, and died a Jew. The Good News, of which He is the messenger, has been moulded in the Semitic mental schemes, ways and customs, and its sensibility and psychology. Hence, the evangelical message is originally as foreign to the West as to Africa. But the West, which also had its traditional religions, has been able to accept it, digest, assimilate and identify it with its culture and civilisation."

The speaker then asks: "If the West has been able to become Christian whilst remaining itself, why shouldn't we also be able to become Christians whilst remaining African?" Christ did not come to give birth to any specific culture. There isn't a Christian civilisation, but there are Christian civilisations. "Through our traditional religions God spoke to us, His Spirit was in action. The evangelical message therefore, does not come to destroy Africa, but, on the contrary, must bring the African religious riches to their perfection. The various intervention of the African bishops at the recent Synod perfectly showed this, particularly when they spoke of the indigenisation of the Gospel. The day will come when, starting from our former traditions and the Gospel, a Christianity will be alive, which without ceasing to be universal, will be so African that it will become identified with our culture. Let us work together so that this wish may become true for the good and the happiness of each African of our entire continent and the civilisation of the world."

D.I.A.

CHRISTIAN -- MARXIST DIALOGUE: OPENINGS

Professor Italo Mancini was lecturing last week (15 May 1975) at the Pro Unione, Rome on the fascinating topic of "convergences" between Marxism and Christianity. Here are the thoughts which kept coming to my mind after the learned conference.

1. Block had articulated for Mancini what he (Mancini) had discovered in his studies about the early Marx: there is a high Marxism, as well as a "popular" one. Mancini reflected that there was a hard core Christianity, besides its "diluted" form. Mancini paused at length on a three step methodology of dialogue: thawing--"compromise"--attention. His thoughts will be developed in a forthcoming book.
2. Meanwhile openings for dialogue between high Marxism and hard core Christianity abound especially at the interpretative level--but have not been exploited. Mancini pointed to some possible lines of research:
  - a) "Popular" Marxism could be liberated from its i) mechanistic determinism; ii) dogmatic materialism; and iii) blockages with the "homo oeconomicus." It has a central truth which has not been fully investigated: the material essence of man. Matter is different from materialism. The historical form of the latter is much more productive than its dogmatic form. Religion is the "capacity to save" from tricky detachment from reality (misery, etc.). To Marx it was the "right of the oppressed creature", a protest against misery. The question is: Is it efficacious? In higher Marxism, there is room for hope, for invocation!
  - b) Christianity could be liberated from its diluted forms if i) we take recent theology seriously; ii) we become future oriented (prolessi); iii) we maintain the Unknown in God (doxology); iv) we rethink transcendence in an historical stance; and v) we go beyond the spiritualistic myth.
3. Dialogue could consider confrontation in the question of hope. Marxism, based on man establishes the principle that man could triumph. Christianity, based on God, also gives credit to the promise that God made to man about this triumph. Hope in Marxism is expressed in Utopia, in Christianity as Promise. Utopia seems to skirt the problem of Evil, Freud's "cupido mortis", radical rather than technical Evil. Can we save ourselves without being saved?

--Fr. B. Tonna



"CONVERGENCES IN THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN MARXISTS AND CHRISTIANS" Conference

(books are available in library of 'Centro Pro Unione')

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- Mancini, Italo; Futuro dell'uomo e spazio per l'invocazione, Ancona, Astrogallo, 1975.
- Miano, Vincenzo; Ateismo e dialogo nell'insegnamento di Paolo VI, Torino, Elle Di Ci, 1970.
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- Passante, Francesco; Per un Dialogo con gli ateimarxisti, gli scettici e i pessimisti, Bologna, Ed. Ponte Nuovo 1964.
- Plank, Max; Scienza, Filosofia e Religione, Milano, Flli Fabbri Ed. 1973.
- Skoda, Francesco; Il Concilio Vaticano II nella critica sovietica, Torino, Elle Di Ci.
- Vanderbent, Ans; The Christian-Marxist Dialogue: An annotated bibliography, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1969.
- Villani, Maurizio; Cristiani e Marxisti a confronto su "l'uomo", Bologna Ed. Dehoniane, 1974.

HEALTH GROUP MEETING

SEDOS 75/415

A meeting of the Group was held at SCMM-M, May 16, 2.30 pm.

Present: Sr. Francis Webster, Sr. Joan Burke, Sr. M. Motte, Sr. A. Deseyn, Fr. Tonna.

Next meetings: October '75, when Sr. Francis comes back.

Conclusions:

- a) The theme of the Autumn Seminar will be:  
Death and dying - conditioning life and healing.
- b) Either Fr. Shorter or Fr. Joinet would be asked to present the African case. Fr. Kaufmann W.F. would be contacted by the Secretariat, to check if they would be passing through Rome in October or November 1975. If so, the date of the Seminar would be fixed to coincide with their presence here.
- c) Sr. Antoinette de Sa would be contacted by Sr. Francis to suggest an Indian or a Filipino (in Rome) to present the Asian case.
- d) The Latin American case could be introduced by a student in Rome. Sr. Deseyn ICM would check on the possibilities.
- e) The objective of the seminars would be that of pinning down openings for the future development of missionary health work. Motivations would be reviewed and focussed - particularly as these concern Religious faced with take over's of institutions by local governments. An attempt would be made to interest men-missionaries.
- f) The seminar could be articulated over a full day. A background paper would be circulated ahead of time. After its presentations and a preliminary response in assembly, the participants would break up into small groups. In the afternoon they could exchange their conclusions in assembly and round off the meeting with the Eucharist. The whole purpose of the seminar would be that of "focussing the minds of participants on certain things". Personal contacts would be fully used to interest as many as possible.

LIST OF PERIODICALS AND SELECTED ARTICLES RECEIVED DURING APRIL

compiled by S. Agnetta, S.Sp.S.

## I. EXTERNAL PERIODICALS

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Name of Periodical</u>
Nos. 1843-1847	Agenzia Internazionale FIDES Informazioni
No. 3/73/1	AMECEA Documentation Service
Easter	The Bridge
No. 43	Bulletin du Centre de Documentation OICE
Vol. 20, No. 2	Christ to the World
April	Christian Leadership Letter
Nos. 15-20	Circulars (USG)
March	Communication (UISG)
Vol. 5, No 3-4	Communique
No. 25	Contact
Vol. 10, No. 2	Contacts
Vol. 13, No. 3	Development Forum
Nos. 132-174	Documentation and Information for and about Africa
Nos. 1672 and 1673	La Documentation Catholique
1/1975	Ekumenisk Orientering - Aktuell
1/1975	Ekumenisk Orientering - Faith and Order
No. 10	Exchange
No. 29	IDOC Bulletin
No. 59	Impact (Zambia)
1/1975	In Via (ACISJF Bulletin)
Nos. 3 and 4	Informatiedienst
No. 477	Informations catholiques Internationales
Vol. 27, No. 3	International Associations
No. 22	Letters from Asia
No. 5	Literacy Today
No. 54	Man's Pese Press
Nos. 16-18	MEB Today
Nos. 112 and 113	Mensaje Iberoamericano
No. 261	Messages du SecOURS Catholique
No. 2/1975	Migration News
No. 4	Ministries and Communities
No. 44	Mission Intercom
3/1975	A Monthly Letter about Evangelism
Vol. 4, Nos. 1-2	Newsletter (Kenya)
Vol. 5, No. 2	Newsletter (WCCU)
April	News Notes (AFPRO)
No. 4	Notes and Comments (Agrimissio)
Vol. 4, No. 1	Notes on Urban-Industrial Mission
Vol. 12, No. 2	Noticelal
No. 68	Omnis Terra (English Edition)
Nos. 11 and 12	One Spirit
No. 5	One World

EXTERNAL PERIODICALS cont.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Name of Periodical</u>
No. 80	Peuples du Monde
No. 53	Pro Mundi Vita (English edition)
Feb. Dos.	Prospective
No. 58	Prudentes
No. 18	Quarterly Record
No. 563	Revista de Misiones
Vol. 11, No. 1	Risk
Nos. 12-16	Ruhr Wort
Nos. 6, 10, 11	Scienza, Tecnica e Organizzazione
Vol. 21, No. 1	Social Compas
Nos. 7029-7033	The Tablet
Feb.-April	World Reporter

II. INTERNAL PERIODICALS

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Name of Periodical</u>
Nos. 228 and 229	AIMIS (FSCJ et al.)
No. 4	ANS (SDB)
Vol. 27, Nos. 2,5,6	Blueprint (SJ)
July to December 1974	Central Newsletter (MHM)
No. 4	Chronica (CICM)
No. 3	CITOC (OCarm)
No. 53	CSSP Newsletter
No. 84	Echos de la rue du Bac (MEP)
Vol. 8, No. 3	Euntes (CICM)
Nos. 286 and 287	Famiglia Comboniana (FSCJ)
No. 3	Fede e Civiltà (SX)
No. 14 FMM	FMM Documentation
No. 24	FMM Information Service
No. 2	ICA - ICM (ICM)
No. 17	JESCOM News (SJ)
Vocation Issue	The Master's Work (SSpS)
No. 12	Missionari Saveriani (SX)
April	Missioni OMI
No. 8	Mondo e Missione (PIME)
No. 4	MSC General Bulletin
December 1974	
No. 7, 1975	Nigrizia (FSCJ)
No. 165	Mundo Negro (FSCJ)
No. 3	Notiziario Cappuccino (OFMCap)
No. 57	OMI Documentation
Nos. 105 and 106	OMI Information
Nos. 659 and 660	Petit Echo (PA)
March and No. 6	Piccolo Missionario (FSCJ)
No. 17	Roman Bulletin (SCMM-I)
March	SECOLI (FSC)
No. 19	SJ Information
No. 79	SMM Intercontinent (SCMM-M)

III. NEW MAGAZINES received during April:A. INTERNAL

CEMAR (SM)

World Parish (MM)

B. EXTERNAL

CMSC News (Conference of Major Superiors of Men, USA)

IV. SELECTED ARTICLES

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Title of Article</u> (Number of pages in brackets)
2.CICM (E8/3/75)	<u>The Pentacostal Movement in Hatsudai</u> , by A. Colyn. In EUNTES, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1975. (6)
2.CICM (E8/3/75)	<u>Shared Prayer in Religious Community Today</u> , by L. Doohan. In EUNTES, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1975. (8)
2.FSCJ (N/Dec/74)	<u>Evangelizzare, non giudicare</u> , by Enrico Bartolucci. In NIGRIZIA, December 1974. (4)
2.FSCJ (N/Dec/74)	<u>La via africana al vangelo</u> , by Giuseppe Butturini. In NIGRIZIA, December, 1974. (6)
2.MM (WP12/109/72)	<u>The eucharistic and eschatological meaning of our effort for development</u> , by René Beeckmans. In WORLD PARISH, Vol. 12, No. 109, 1972. (3)
2.MI (WP13/117/73)	<u>Basic Communities in the Church</u> , by D. Delanote. In WORLD PARISH, Vol. 13, No. 117, 1973. (3)
2.PA (PE/660/75)	<u>Can we choose an African name at baptism?</u> by Frédéric Dayo. In PETIT ECHO, No. 660, 1975. (4)
2.PA (PE/660/75)	<u>Pastoral-oriented teaching in the seminary</u> , by Marcel Neels. In PETIT ECHO, No. 660, 1975. (9)
2.PIME (Mem/8/75)	<u>Un viaggio fra gli indios del Sud America</u> , by Giorgio Pecorari. In MONDO E MISSIONE, No. 8, 1975. (26)
2.SJ (B27/5/75)	<u>Woman - Intrepid and Loving</u> . Pastoral letter to the people of the Diocese of Memphis, Tenn., USA, by Most Rev. Carrol Dozier. In BLUEPRINT, Vol. 27, No. 5, 1975. (6)
2.SJ (SI/19/75)	<u>Jesuits in Prisons</u> . Account of the Seventh Step Foundation. In SJ INFORMATION, No. 19, 1975. (7)
2.SVD (WiW/75)	<u>Creative Liturgy</u> , by Jon Kirby. In THE WORD IN THE WORLD 1975. (10)
2.SVD (SM/75)	<u>Steyl - 1875-1975</u> . In STEYLER MISSIONSCHRONIK 1975. (192)
5.CW (20/2/75)	<u>The Campaign of Brotherhood in Brazil</u> , by Cardinal Arns. In CHRIST TO THE WORLD, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1975. (5)
5.CW (20/2/75)	<u>"Christians for Socialism": What the Bishops of Chile think</u> . In CHRIST TO THE WORLD, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1975. (7)
5.E (9/74)	<u>African studies on "Independency" in (Eastern) Nigeria</u> , by Leny Lagerwerf. In EXCHANGE, No. 9, 1974. (27)
5.E (10/75)	<u>Current aspects of evangelization</u> , by H. Rosin. In EXCHANGE, No. 10, 1975. (44)
5.I (P.I.) (10/1/75)	<u>Human Rights</u> . Theme of IMPACT, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1975. (34)
5.N (12/2/75)	<u>La vita religiosa nel processo di liberazione in America Latina</u> , by Leonard Boff, OFM. In NOTICEIAL, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1975. (9)

IV. SELECTED ARTICLES cont.

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Title of Article (Number of pages in brackets)</u>
5.P (EM dos.)	<u>Eglise et Ministeres. Documents Ecclésiaux: catholiques.</u> In PROSPECTIVE, March 1975. (1 dossier)
5.P (EM dos.)	<u>Eglise et ministeres. Approche Sociologique.</u> In PROSPECTIVE, March 1975. (5 doc.)
5.P (EM dos.)	<u>Eglise et ministeres. Approche Théologique: catholique.</u> In PROSPECTIVE, March 1975. (6 doc.)
5.PMV (53/75)	<u>The Church in Ghana.</u> In PROMMUNDI VITA, No. 53, 1975. (36)
5.SE (11/1/75)	<u>Education for Community and Liberation,</u> by Clifford Wright. In STUDY ENCOUNTER, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1975. (12)