

MARGINALIZATION AND LIBERATION

by

Fr. PAUL F. MOODY, P.A.

The title seems inconsequent; the consequent thoughts may be trivial. My only excuse for putting them on paper is that having made a third return to Africa, and being for the third time in a process of apprenticeship, I thought that some of the ideas exercising what I have for years presumed to be my mind may also stir useful activity in the mind of someone else. Three arrivals: 1958, 1966, 1975. Before independence and the Vatican Council; the same mission after both; now another mission and another country. A pattern of reinsertion in a context of change. Is it perhaps relevant to say too that my Society held two General Chapters in the same period?

Experience

The first time I landed in Africa I had already been a member of the Society for ten years; as I recall, hardly any of the Fathers responsible for my "formation" at any stage, had experience of African reality beyond their reading or their contact with returning missionaries. In the course of training we were led carefully through the current textbooks of this and that, and through the various handbooks of the Society - the Constitutions, Directory, and various "Instructions".

As the years pass, one's store of memories and anecdotes increases, often coloured by repeated telling - a valid contribution to community living. One's range of reference increases, basis for sometimes clarifying sometimes confusing comparisons. What we call experience is generally an impression made on us by the past - a past which will not return, often enough coloured by wishful thinking in retrospect. I was trained and made use of as a teacher of humanities, for upwards of fifteen years; priestly work was continual but marginal to the main effort. I learned a lot from my students, particularly to question my cherished assumptions; I learned that efficiency is not enough and that standards are essentially relative.

I spent five years in Rome at the Generalate - a time of expiation perhaps, but also pre-eminently a time of preparation for being a "grassroots missionary". Intercongregational activities brought me into touch with many superiors, men and women; it was possible to watch developing in many of them a genuine desire to share, to avoid duplication of effort, to promote teamwork. However, much real experience went unused, sometimes because those who had it did not enjoy the facility of communicating but often it was because there was no structure for fostering and recording their reflections. (1) Quite often the communicators - whose main function I submit should be to facilitate others' communications - percolated their material according to a tried but outmoded formula. (2)

- (1) Impressions of Superiors on whistle-stop tours are inadequate "feedback".
- (2) Very noticeable the effect of lack of pastoral experience on the work of communicators and of "formation" directors.

No one seemed to have an idea of how to use the questionings and criticisms or expostulations of the younger men (3)

Two deep impressions remain with me: the many superiors who went from one reunion to another relying on the prestige of their function; the patient painstaking men who worked long hours in obscure corners collating, classifying and re-producing information. (4)

For many years we have been submitted to the views of the "experts"; they are not always good "resource persons", consultants, or general administrators. (5) It may well be that too many of us were anxious to be "experts" when we would have been capable of better service had we patiently accumulated resources for eventual calls on our competence.

Theory

It might be helpful for each of us to recall the technical baggage we took to "the mission" in terms of missiological and pastoral training, to review too its subsequent development, assess our resources now.

Of late there has been a tendency - depressing to some, rewarding to others - to rely on sociology, anthropology, even psychology (or is it therapeutic psychiatry? ... witness several disquisitions on, say, "group dynamics",) at the expense of serious theological enquiry. Maybe the reason lies in fashions and fads, or in a decline in the standards of schools of theology; it certainly was not always so rewarding to assist at the defense of "theological" theses for which doctorates were granted.

We have seen the rise and fall of a certain mythological missiology, deriving apparently from a desire to find encouragement - and publicity - in a rather obvious adulation of founding Fathers. There is a danger today not only that we may be the last to recognise and acknowledge the negative factors in past mission, but that our young missionaries find themselves suddenly face to face with evidence of former blunders for which they were unprepared.

- (3) "Either the adult world manages to understand and win the confidence of the young, giving them their rights and seeking their positive cooperation, or it will find itself faced with an explosion and dangerous rupture which could lead to continuous confrontation between two forces in need of each other, older people and the young". Pedro Arrupe, sj, A Planet to Heal.
- (4) How often information becomes archival before being properly used. Documentation is not necessarily information.
- (5) They grind axes; the curtain rarely rises on the plays they assiduously rehearse.

Returning to the "grassroots" of evangelisation one is forced to examine seriously things often said but rarely practised: that community living is a necessary element in an apostolate based on a commandment of fraternity; that really Christian relations are the stuff and substance of pastoral influence; that priesthood is service, not dominance from a position of privilege; that the local Church is our authority; that salvation is not confined to the spiritual.

How far can a man go, how long can a missionary persevere and preach Christ, if the theories he most esteems are humanistic, or if his professed theories are at variance, inconsistent, with his practices, - worse, if the structures into which he is inserted are at variance with the gospel roots of his profession?

Marginalization

We have been accustomed over the years to thinking of marginalization as something that happens to poor people, in the barrios or favelas of Latin America or in urban slums anywhere ... to people born without prospects, living without opportunity and dying without regret. I would like to suggest that we ourselves, missionaries and especially missionary priests, are suffering the same kind of exclusion from the main-stream of life, and that it is in our case largely our own fault. I would like to suggest further that this marginalization is not by any means a completely negative factor but that it can only be really positive in so far as we react positively to it.

Despite constant encouragement to optimism from our animators, the drop in candidacies (not, it seems to me, in vocations), the increase in withdrawals, the abiding preoccupation with insurance funds, contingency contracts, transfers to and justification of peripheral activities, all indicate a loss of grip on - perhaps contact with - reality. If we are not willing to look squarely at and appreciate the signs of the times, having recourse to spiritual axioms and ideals may well seem escapism to the less spiritually endowed among us. When I read exhortations from those living in high places - the Latin I think is "in Coelestibus" which one is inclined to doubt - I often find myself thinking: All very well for him; he is not in the maelstrom. It is not a question of finding the right thoughts and being able to express them; it is a question of credibility. I recall that at the end of my long retreat, which I appreciated, for which I am grateful, and which may have done me good, I said that there was very little I had heard which could help me - the context and attitudes were too remote from the reality of the mission I was attached to.

Optimism

Effective publicity does not mean optimism necessarily, especially if the agent does not believe in what he is promoting but only in the sale of it. Frequent reunions do not breed optimism if the exchanges are dominated by some who hang on at all costs to the relics of a past for which they sigh, or by a grim determination to go on doing what they have become good at, regardless of current relevance.

It seems to me that the main-stream is always characterised by optimism, even

when it is destructive. Yesterday I stood on the banks of the Lufuko where it sped round a bend and gathered force and purity as more resistant banks restricted its freedom above a stretch of "rapids"; swirling in a backwater on the outer shore there was a scum of detritus held back by brushwood - but it seemed to be straining to return to the frothing centre flow.

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the priest, not only with the missionary priest and not only among non-priests (6); our principles, our procedures and our credentials are questioned; responsibilities that we had been expected to assume are taken from us and others are proposed. Because in many places we are no longer in control of schools and hospitals and development programmes does not mean that we are no longer able to contribute effectively to education, to health-care or to human promotion (7). Because laymen are assuming their proper responsibility in planning and administering Church life in fields for which they have or can acquire competence does not mean that we have less to do.

Because the time has come for local Churches to control their own destiny and the authentic pattern of their Christianity - manage their own affairs and elaborate their own policies - does not mean that the missionary societies have been put aside or have lost something of value.

I suggest that we look still more closely at the concept of subsidiarity, of "suppléance". It may not always mean "doing our thing" but it certainly means helping the new incumbents to do theirs; in the past we were inclined to say that the Church assumed a role of subsidiarity where civil powers or local communities lacked sufficient means to help their people - to assure their security and welfare; is it less Christian to listen sympathetically to what they want to do, help them to appreciate their own resources (8), find with them the weak points and then offer "insertion" (not "ingérence") in their autonomous efforts? Could God be less glorified because the authorities we help to help His children do not acknowledge Him as we do?

Some months ago, I met a comparatively young missionary priest who had withdrawn from the field because religious instruction in schools had been forbidden: "I was a teacher of religion, of professional standing" he said. For a long time it has been said in missionary planning circles that what is needed is not so much the "specialist" as the "generalist"; is it not possible that the best generalist is the specialist who diversifies his competence on the basis of a solid discipline?

- (6) May I suggest that the crisis is not in priesthood but in the discipline of priesthood which imposed on them custodianship of Church property, defence of rigid and questionable procedures, tenants of more privilege than local society wished to accord them.
- (7) Service is response to a felt expressed need.
- (8) How many talents and resources have been lost because of our importations?

Nostalgia is not optimistic and wishful thinking is not optimistic; we can afford to leave psychedelic visions to escapists from reality. Missiology requires careful study of history, and perhaps the time has come to insist on restoring the balance in missionary history; it was not all glorious within. How much has been suppressed and in how far is current opposition - usually interpreted as opposition to the gospel - both inside and outside the Church, a delayed reaction to misconceptions and aberrations in the past? Exaggerated reaction is usually the result of undue or untimely resistance to desirable and inevitable change.

Liberation

: We have been used to thinking of liberation as something the other person needed, towards which we had to help him on the basis of gospel principles and values. Maybe I do not need to continue ... however, for the limbering-up of my own grey matter I shall go on.

To be marginalized is a mercy of Providence: it gives us both space and time for re-orientation. In terms of missionary congregations, it would seem that history is pointing to the abandonment of prerogative in "their" mission territories. Signs are that we must approach joint pastoral action ("pastorale d'ensemble" - not just multiplicity of expertise, but co-responsibility). How can this come about if each congregation continues - outside such areas as formation and communication, - areas essentially internal - , to re-distribute personnel and assign work without reference to others? How can bishops be really in charge of their dioceses if personnel seconded to them, including lay people, are not available for teamwork according to ascertained needs of the People of God? Liberation here clearly implies abandoning some inherited structures and traditions of administration. Insistence on dialogue is all very well, until it becomes a means of pressure, even by unspoken menaces, from a position of power (control of resources), diminishing the authority of the rightful executive.

Some time ago I wrote that authority is based on competence, not always the competence of the one who exercises it. Here perhaps lies the real secret of loyal team-work. I also wrote that the basis of leadership is confidence in two directions, and that the link in the chains of authority and leadership is the same: consultation. This is where the "expert" comes into his own, but not all the time. This is where the "speciality" finds its justification, but not all the time. For missionaries, this is where training and experience find their fulfilment, but not all the time. If anyone likes this sort of thinking, he might like to continue along these lines: influence is not power; often the two are mutually exclusive; the greatest influence is often exercised from the bottom floor.

For a long time we missionaries have stood in need of liberation: now we have it in varying degrees, most often by force of circumstance rather than by conscious design.

We are all familiar with the poor fellow who is given freedom for which he was unprepared, and who finds the burden insupportable ... even the Bible allowed for the re-indentation of slaves. At last in country after country we are being given

the opportunity to do what we received a vocation for: to live and communicate the gospel message.

Just before I left Rome, I was talking to a group of our younger members. "How do you propose to earn your living?" they asked. In Brussels while I waited for the plane, Fathers asked: "What on earth do you expect to do out there?" "As little as possible" I replied. There is ample space for getting away from our "activist" mentality that has been so oppressive to citizens of our hosting countries, to faithful of our hosting local Churches. If we "were" the right kind of people, freed from complexes, freed from urgencies (except the "caritas Christi"), freed from nostalgic memories, we would be easier to live with and we just might have more influence. Certainly the best collaborator and the most loyal replacement is a friend; sometimes it seems to me that we have not spent enough time making friends. We did increase the numbers of "faithful" - faithful to us; we did gather a lot of "dependents", "familiaris", even "clients". In the process of fostering our own liberation, we might come to see also how to liberate our neighbours, or rather help them to liberate themselves - even from us, a necessary step towards gaining dignity by standing on their own feet. Maybe we can interpret in this way the mot d'ordre of the last WF Chapter: "priority to tasks of a pioneer nature". There is no real education that does not encourage self-education, on-going education; no real discipline that does not lead to self-discipline; no genuine health-care that does not make the individual and the community responsible for their own health. There is only education for dependence, discipline for submissiveness and therapy leading to helplessness.

Since coming back to Africa I have been struck by the immense generosity of single people as busy as can be all over the place, reduplicating each others' efforts: instruction leaflets, translations, animation sessions. One of the benefits of greater freedom might be greater mobility: have we reflected enough on the openings for mobile teams - not just uni-congregational? (9) It should be clear that yet another advantage might be availability ("disponibilité"); so often in reunions for planning we hear the complaint that there are just not enough people available - when in fact we do not know how to make them free ... everyone as busy as can be doing what a group effort might do more economically and efficiently. "The Church has to live the general process of development today. It looks like the most secular thing, but so was colonialism. What could be more secular than colonialism? But the Church entered into that with all its heart and soul - the most glorious period in its history! And so today, when the people of the world are coming into a consciousness of themselves the Church also has to enter into that process ... The Christian STANDARD of humanity is what makes you free to give yourself".

Maybe our liberation can come partly from marginalization with its accompanying space and time and - hopefully - silence to hear what the Lord and the faithful are saying in little voices.

(9) SEDOS has ample information on inter-congregational teams in all sectors of mission.

In conclusion

Some points for discussion if you are not already exasperated:

1. Despite lacunae in our formation and limitations in our personal experience, how far does our present endowment fit us for insertion in a community Church in this brave new world?
2. Is there sufficient contemporary mission-feedback in our systems of formation and sufficient suppleness in facing candidacies which envisage prospects of untraditional community living and witness?
3. What kind of service and what use are we expecting from our specialists and experts; has overtraining in one direction faced them with frustration?
4. Are we open to a frank assessment of mission history and historical mission in a world where justice and equity and the dignity of man are priorities?
5. Are we being fair to our Superiors? Do we expect from them inspiration and animation that we can derive from our local resources; and do we really exercise co-responsibility in giving them the best possible feedback from the "grassroots"?
6. How far are we promoting optimism and the resourcefulness that justifies it in a world where much must die in order that more may find new life?
7. Are we activist in the sense that we associate sanctity with zeal and zeal with rushing about and creating a commotion?
8. Do we expect to be charismatic all the time, as though we could "turn on" the Holy Spirit according to our personal lights?
9. In all we do that is worthwhile for the foreseeable future, are we guaranteeing to hand over to successors with necessary resources for the days ahead?
10. Has the truth really set us free and enabled us to put at the service of the local Church both new things and old?
11. Are we open to the collaboration with structures that we may not control beyond the influence of what we have to offer that responds to local aspirations?
12. What do we mean by "service", "presence", "subsidiarity", "dialogue", "influence"?

P.S. Would it be intolerably presumptuous on my part to refer the reader to the last paragraph in an article entitled "Formation" in Joint Venture no. 2 (March 1971) a quotation of Fr. Joao Coutinho: "When the distress of the 'other' becomes necessary for my own meaningfulness, then a threshold has been reached that should not be crossed".

Lusaka 19/11/75.

Paul F. Moody, w.f.

Mission Lusaka,
B.P. 59 MIBA/SYABA,
République du Zaïre.

NEWS FROM AND FOR THE GENERALATESWELCOME!! A New Member

We are most pleased to welcome the congregation of the Religious Sisters of the Good Shepherd, R.S.G., into the SEDOS family. Their generalate is located at Via dei Casali Santovetti, 45 (gia Via Guido Zanobini) 00164 Roma, Tel. 62.29.241. Sr. Bernadette Fox is the Superior General.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Father Willy Goosens, CICM, and four companions are in Lisbon preparing to begin a mission in Mozambique about Easter 1976—he sends his best wishes to "all my cherished friends in SEDOS".

Sister Marjorie Keenan, RSHM, departed Rome on January 5th to begin a new apostolate in her home province in the United States and sent her "gratitude to all my associates in SEDOS, who contributed so much to making my years in Rome so fruitful."

Sr. Joan Burke left Rome in early January to return to her own province (Notre Dame Provincialate, 14800 Bohlman Road, Saratoga 95070 California, U.S.A.). She expresses sincere gratitude to SEDOS and its members for all they gave to her in her five years in Rome.

Terry Waite, who is known to be available to many through the SEDOS secretariat, is currently in Ghana with possible visits to other West African countries and will not be back in Rome until mid-February. March will take him to Latin America and May to Uganda, Mozambique, Swaziland and possibly other parts of East Africa. August and September will find him in the Southern Philippines. All this is to say: Plan ahead if you plan to catch him here!!

GREETINGS

Father Paul (Frank) Moody, W.F., from his mission Lusaka, Zaïre, sent his Christmas-New Years wishes to "all the friends that so enriched my years in Rome, my SEDOS friends."

The SEDOS Secretariat wants to take this opportunity to thank all those who shared with us their best wishes for the holiday season through the mails.

NOTEWORTHY

The Brothers of the Christian Schools will begin their chapter on Wednesday 14 April 1976. You may wish to note that Brother Charles Henry is not eligible for reelection.

For the archives at SEDOS we are short copies of bulletin number 21 of 1975. Anyone who might have an extra copy or could spare their copy of N.21 is asked to please contact the Secretariat, Tel. 571.350.

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF 12 JANUARY 1976

A meeting of the Executive Committee was held on January 12th, 1976 at 4.00 pm at the SEDOS Secretariat.

Present: Sr. Claire Rombouts, icm Fr. John Powers, sma
 Sr. Danita McGonagle, ssnd Fr. James Lozé, sj
 Sr. Frances Webster, scmm-m Sr. Mary Motte, fmm

Chairman: Brother Charles Henry Buttimer, fsc

Secretary: Father Paul Brekelmans, pa

- The Minutes of the previous meeting of 9th December 1975 were approved. Two corrections were noted for the List of Participants of the 48th General Assembly (cfr. Sedos Documentation, n. 32, p. 675): Sr. E Heinz, RSHM should be Sr. E. Harvey, RSHM, and Fr P. Blaies, PA should be stricken. Further, it was noted that Fr. James Lozé, sj, will substitute for Fr. Ary at Executive Committee Meetings until the June Assembly.
- Evaluation of the 48th General Assembly, 15th December 1975 (cfr. SEDOS Documentation, no. 32, pp. 670-674):
 - = no formal evaluation was carried out following the Assembly, and one member of the Executive suggested that this be done following the next Assembly.
 - = among the echoes heard concerning participation in the Assembly:
 - insufficient time to prepare between the talks and the discussions
 - discussion groups were too large
 - too much material for discussion
 - several participants were pleased with the new arrangement for the Assembly
 - = suggestions for the future:
 - pre-registration to avoid groups which are too large and to facilitate preparation for the Assembly.
 - prepared texts be circulated to participants before the Assembly so as to allow time for study/raising of questions, etc.
 - have highlights noted at the Assembly by those who prepared texts; allowing more time for reflection and discussion.
 - prepare a type of questionnaire for the participants in order to bring out the important points of the texts
 - make some arrangement for a business meeting - possibly the final 45 minutes of the day

Preparation for the June Assembly:

- = date: 8th June 1976 - full day. Other details will be decided later.
- = topic: HOW IS MISSION BEING PRESENTED TODAY ?
- = preparatory material: Fr. Lozé, who will coordinate the June Assembly, presented a series of suggestions to the Committee:
 - a survey of the theology of mission
 - preparation of a survey of motivation for the task of evangelization:
 - . candidates
 - . mission procurators
 - . missionaries over 50 years of age
 - direct preparation of the two topics for the Assembly:
 - . what is the task of the missionary
 - . proper motivation of the candidates and missionaries
- = further suggestions included:
 - use some of the material as preparation for the Assembly, whether through articles in the bulletin and/or ad hoc meetings when the situation would warrant;
 - consider terminology used in reference to mission
 - consider the views of editors of periodicals concerned with mission
 - atmosphere of Assembly should be not only intellectual, but there should be an atmosphere of prayer evident.

It was decided that Fr. Lozé should proceed with the work, make the necessary contacts, and further details would be studied next month.

Organization of the SEDOS Secretariat:

- = Help is needed in the Secretariat. Brother Charles Henry will again send out letters to the Superiors General - members of SEDOS, and Fr. Brekelmans will contact volunteer organizations in the hope of finding someone to work in the Secretariat.

The application of one person was studied, but some questions were raised since the application was for a temporary period - 6 to 7 months. It was decided to study the application further when the person would be in Rome.

Next Meeting:

The Executive Committee will meet on 16th February 1976 at the ICN Generalate.

Mary Motte, fmm.

Our Documentation Center contains many treasures, for instance:-

ASIA'S SEARCH FOR CHRIST: A THEOLOGICAL PARADIGM

1. The paradigm we present here is not of our creation. It comes from the pen of an Asian satirist legendarily known as Matthew Levi. His subject is Asia's Search for Christ. In a mythical idiom, he dramatizes an authentically historical fact: that of Oriental looking Westwards for an encounter with Christ. This, ever-recurring, event is deeply embedded in the Christian memory and is exteriorized ritually on every 6th of January: the Epiphany, Christ's revelation to the Orientals.
2. Matthew puts it in the form of a three-act tragedy:- The Search, The Disillusionment and The Discovery (Mt 2/1-12). The whole drama is packed with pithy theological utterances astoundingly contemporary in their implications.
3. Act I: The Search. "We saw His star in the East and so we came to worship Him" (Mt 2/2). Here Matthew has laid the foundation for an Asian Theology of Religion which he builds up into a magnificent structure, later. In this terse formula, he has compressed at least six theological pointers:-
 - (a) A light has appeared in the East. Therefore, with regard to the process of liberation, the East is not clueless.
 - (b) It was His light that they saw. Christ's coming is revealed in the East even before Jerusalem hears about it (4).
 - (c) They recognize it as His light.
 - (d) They recognize it as a sacramental pointer to a mystery that entices them to a deeper search; they are not content with the light and so they look for its Source.
 - (e) Hence the long journey through the deserts and lonely highways. The Orientals do not know short-cuts; their way is tedious and ascetically demanding!
 - (f) The light leads them Westwards, to a City on the Mountain.
4. Act II: The Disillusionment. Now, Matthew brings the whole drama to a peak of irony, contrasting the seriousness of the Asian sages with the complacency of God's priests in Jerusalem.

The stage is in total darkness as the curtain rises. The pilgrims grope their way for light ... Here, then, are the scenes of the second Act:-

 - (a) The light that shines in the East is not seen in the City on the mountain (Mt 2/9). Jerusalem is in the dark with regard to the birth of Christ.
 - (b) It is from the Eastern Sages that Jerusalem hears the Good News (Mt 2/2-5). It is through them that God reveals to His Own in Jerusalem that He is available in Christ. It is their inquiry that provokes the priests to read the scriptures for further light (Mt 2/5).

- (c) The question that epitomizes the Asian Quest is not "Who is He?" or "What is He?", but "Where is He?" (Mt 2/2a), as if to say, 'put us in contact with Christ, not with Christology!' for, "we have come to worship Him" (Mt 2/2b).

What satisfies their thirst is experience and not explanations!

- (d) Herod, who would not hesitate to kill the innocent, in a moment of insecurity and also the People associated with this oppressor, were all perturbed by the Good News (Mt 2/3).

Thus, when Asia's struggle to discover the ultimate Source of Liberation comes to fruition at the door-step of the West, with the news: "The Liberator is here", it does not sound "Good Tidings" to the Establishment, both secular and Religious. Anything may be resorted to, in order to suppress the imminent liberation (Mt 2/16).

- (e) Neither God's Word in the bible nor God's People in Jerusalem constitute the destination of the Asian Pilgrimage. Yet, they are both consulted in the course of the quest. They serve the pilgrims of Christ as sacraments inviting them to go beyond. In fact the Magi leave the Holy Place in order to find Christ!

- (f) The final scene: The Sages from the East depart alone!

Jerusalem's priests, custodians of the Law, Interpreters of Revelation, Guardians of Tradition and Guides of Israel would not join the Asians in their search for Christ, and consequently, fail to participate in their discovery too, (Mt 2/12).

5. Act III: The Discovery The anticlimax! Asia's tedious journey in pursuit of the Liberator ends up in a labourer's hut...! They discover that the light shining in the East radiates from a rural house! Liberation of Asia is announced from a rustic's improvised home. The ASIAN CHRIST is found seated on the knees of a peasant woman, a worker's wife. The End of the Quest! (Mt 2/10-11).

The Asian Wisdom crouches in humility before a villager's son. This is true Worship, Liturgy supreme: that they adore the Saviour by laying down their gold at the door-step of His shanty Home (Mt 2/11).

They return home Eastwards with the Good News. The same Providence that guided them to the Saviour makes them by-pass Jerusalem, the institutional centre of God's People. Its leadership was not available for the Asians in their search for Christ; and, therefore, it is not indispensable for proclaiming Him in Asia. (Mt 2/12).

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This is part of a paper entitled "Contemporary Ecumenism and Asia's Search for Christ", which was presented to the Asian Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists in Manila, in June 1975, by Aloysius Pieris, S.J.

A HOLY YEAR SYMPOSIUM ON SACRED MUSIC

by Rev. Fr. Paul van Thiel, P.A.

A Holy Year Symposium on Sacred Music in mission countries was held from 14 till 22 November 1975 in Domus Mariae, Rome. This Simposio Internazionale Musico-ethnologico was organized by the Consociatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae (C.I.M.S.).

Consociatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae

This International Association for Sacred Music was established by the decree of Pope Paul VI "Nobile Subsidium Liturgiae", promulgated on 22 November 1963. The object of this association is to promote the cooperation and agreement among all those who devote themselves to the noble art of Sacred Music, and to achieve its development according to the prescriptions of the Church. This form of international body should also help missionaries to solve the difficult and important problems of Sacred Music in their respective mission fields (Cf. N.S.L.).

Main theme of the symposium

The main theme of this Holy Year Symposium was art. 119 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, promulgated on 4 December 1963. This article deals with the problem of whether "musica indigena" may be useful in christian cult, and—if so—to what extent this indigenous music can or should be used in Divine Worship. Three vast mission areas were specifically dealt with, viz. Africa, India and Australia/Oceania. The officially listed congressists came from five continents, although most of the musicologists came from ten different European countries. Africa was represented by Rev. Fr. Robert Ouedraogho from Upper Volta and by Rev. Fr. Dr. Stephen Mbunga from Tanzania; India was represented by Rev. Fr. Walter Albuquerque, S.J. from Mangalore.

The official opening as well as all the working sessions took place in the Aula Magna of Domus Mariae which was provided with simultaneous translation facilities. The opening speech was delivered by the President of C.I.M.S., Msgr. Prof. Dr. Johannes Overath from Cologne, Germany. Some ecclesiastical authorities were present, such as Msgr. Prof. Dr. Ferdinand Haberl, President of the Pontificio Instituto di Musica Sacra and Msgr. Pitzki who attended on behalf of His Eminence Cardinal Rossi of the Congregation of Rites.

The sessions

The first conference was given by Prof. Dr. Bruno Nettl from Campaign, U.S.A. and dealt with different aspects of ethnomusicology, such as methods of research and specific techniques of approaching non-western musical cultures. Prof. Dr. Joseph Kuckerts from Cologne treated the fundamental problem of adapting indigenous music to christian worship. He explained how traditional melodies and rhythms are being used in worship music throughout the world, in countries such as Upper Volta, Japan and Iran and in religions such as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Prof. Dr. K. Wachsmann from Northwestern University, Evanston, U.S.A. (now retired) threw light on different aspects of African musical cultures, such as enculturation, concepts of rhythmic patterns and melodic formulae, musical inspiration and emotional expression. Rev. Fr. Dr. St. Mbunga elaborated on the historical development of church music in general and explained how

non-religious music has in the course of the centuries been adapted in christian worship. In Tanzania, local cultures are more and more closely linked up with christianity and greater importance is being given to introducing local music into the liturgical celebrations. Rev. Fr. R. Ouedraogho accentuated the rhythmic character of the traditional Mossi music, he stressed also the high tonality of his mother language. Experimentations have clearly shown how the indigenous music of the Mossi can amplify the word and how it can help the faithful to express their inner feelings and emotions more exteriorly. Prof. Dr. J. Kuckerts explained the different characteristics of classical Indian music, such as its structure, its general musical forms and the importance of the melodic ornamentation of the raga and the kalyani. Rev. Fr. W. Albuquerque spoke of experimentations and a number of practical problems with regard to the "indianization" of worship music, such as language problems, difference in performing techniques, and specifically the lack of trained musicians. Prof. Dr. Andrew McCredie from Adelaide, Australia, gave a detailed account of ethnomusicological research undertaken in Australia/Oceania; he described how the traditional music of these distinct peoples has gradually been incorporated in liturgical worship, and how symbolism and ideomatic expressions are actually used in the liturgical texts. All the conferences were illustrated with interesting musical recordings.

Discussions/Reactions

Besides the three priest-composers of Sacred Music from Africa and India mentioned above, there were only very few indigenous or missionary expert musicians present who are really involved in this more or less specialized missionary activity. Nevertheless, they were given the opportunity to function as a mouth-piece for the many who could not be present. Their contributions, as musicologists as well as pastors, varied from valuable experience to critical comments, from current difficulties and queries to concrete suggestions and practical proposals. We elaborate here on a few of the most important reactions.

a. Pastoral value of indigenous sacred music

When the African and Indian speakers had played samples of sacred indigenous music from their respective mission lands to illustrate what has been achieved so far and what is actually being sung in the liturgy, critical comments and remarks were given by several European musicologists. Basing himself on his personal experience in different countries of Central and East Africa, a missionary was given the opportunity to explain (1) that the attempts to compose indigenous worship music in the missions had certainly not reached that high standard which the European musicologists had expected, and that the musical compositions had not reached that peak of perfection which everybody in the missions is aiming at from the musicological point of view. He also made clear (2) that the Sacred Music which is being sung in the mission churches does appeal to the worshipping faithful there, although it does perhaps mean nothing to the European musicologists; that it has an impact on the African worshippers; that it does help them to pray better and to worship with more understanding. What has been achieved so far should therefore not be underestimated from the pastoral point of view.

b. The Text-music problem

The mediocre quality of these musical compositions is mainly due to a serious language problem. Excellent translations into the vernacular have been produced by the linguistic experts in many dioceses, but they are often an unfortunate stumbling block for the

local musicians who have to set them to music. In the ~~African mission lands~~ concerned, prose texts can hardly be used in musical compositions, because the so-called through-composed music is not common. It is the solo-response technique which is predominantly practiced. Therefore it was suggested that the liturgical prose texts to be set to music should be adequately adapted to the African musical structure, for instance by omitting, adding or changing one or another word, by modifying short phrases or by paraphrasing, obviously always having in mind that the meaning of the adapted texts is entirely equivalent to the original one. To improve the quality of the musical compositions of Sacred Music, the formulation of thoughts, ideas and sentences should appropriately fit the chosen structure of the musical composition. In many African countries official liturgical texts have factually been changed quite frequently, always under the guise of "ad experimentum"! The era of experimentations can not continue forever. It was therefore suggested that this problem should be officially regulated, that guidelines be given to composers of African Sacred Music in connection with ornamenting, modifying or shaping liturgical texts in such a manner that they would properly fit the indigenous musical framework. Such a practical directive would considerably help the creative artist to improve the standard of his musical compositions. It was suggested that the proper channel through which these official directives could or should be achieved is the Consociatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae.

c. The use of musical instruments

Another matter brought up for discussion was the adequate use of musical instruments during Divine Worship. Various aspects of this vital problem were raised by a missionary from Africa who based himself on a number of statements, suggestions and proposals presented to him in the course of several years by African composers from several Central and East African countries.

Conclusion

During the closing session Prof. Dr. Kuckerts gave a summary covering the principal topics regarding the practical application of Art. 119 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: the relationship between text and music, which is specifically of paramount importance in countries where tonal languages are spoken; the acculturational process in the mission countries concerned; a deep understanding of the musical style is indispensable to select those musical elements which are suitable as basis for christian service; more frequent and efficient collaboration between ethnomusicologists and local musicians and missionaries; the adequate use of indigenous musical instruments, etc.

Finally, Prof. Dr. Overrath stressed that, although "due importance is to be attached to the musical traditions of the different peoples in the mission lands" (cf. art. 119), "the Church acknowledges Gregorian Plainchant as proper to the Roman Liturgy" (cf. art. 116). Further he disclosed that the establishment of a research centre was desirable as it would enable the C.I.M.S. to acquit itself better of its enormous task. As the financial sources were scarce and very limited, he suggested that perhaps a modest start could be made by erecting an international archive of indigenous religious music from all over the world.

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—Fr. van Thiel has been concerned since 1956 with African indigenization of the liturgy. His work has taken him to the Universities of London and California for special studies in African music and ethnomusicology, as well as to Uganda for research and fieldwork.

NEWS FROM AND FOR THE GENERALATESSEDOS and Commission VI

From the minutes of the Commission VI meeting of 17 December 1975 we take the following: "We put together the few points where SEDOS was mentioned. In the course of our discussion, on the topic 'Exchange between Churches' it was said that it is of importance to be posted on what is being done in the Young Churches. Commission VI knows that SEDOS is doing this and wishes that it go on keeping us informed of what is being done in the Young Churches."

As a result of this, Fr. Broekmans, Executive Secretary, has been invited to participate in all of the meetings of Commission VI.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

After four years of publication under the capable editorship of Father Paul Moody, WF, JOINT VENTURE ceased publication with the issue number 15. This decision was reached by the General Assembly of June 1975, following the evaluation of all SEDOS activities during the springtime of that year. The rising costs of printing and of materials were the most telling considerations that led to this decision.

The reasons which led SEDOS in the autumn of 1970 to launch this publication in two language editions were several, but the principal was to try to bring the insights on mission, that were channelled into SEDOS by its member Institutes, to a larger audience composed of episcopal conferences, conferences of religious in Africa and Asia and in the "non-mission" areas of the Church, and to institutes of research and of pastoral training. The publication was well received; many were the letters of commendation received from Bishops, religious superiors, and grass-roots missionaries. It was with regret, but with the realism of the financial and personnel problems involved, that the Assembly voted to cease publication with issue 15, which itself was published only in English.

The Bulletin of SEDOS will continue publication, semi-monthly, under the supervision of the Executive Secretary of the organization. It will be distributed in the Institutes of SEDOS.

To Father Moody and the many generous collaborators that enabled the editor to give us the quarterly numbers that appeared for four years, I extend the gratitude of all of us in SEDOS. We will be hearing from them still from time to time as they share their thoughts with us through the Bulletin.

Brother Charles Henry, FSC
President, SEDOS

LISTS OF DOCUMENTS, PERIODICALS AND BOOKS RECEIVED DURING DECEMBER 1975 compiledby Sister Agnetta, SSpS.

1. DOCUMENTS

A. Internal

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Institute</u>	<u>Title of Document</u> (no. of pages in brackets)
1.565	RSCJ	The Vocation of the Christian in contact with the Moslems, by C. van Nispen, SJ. (6).

B. External

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Title of Document</u> (no. of pages in brackets)
4.2025	PMV	El Conflicto Irlandes y la Concina de Christiana. (32)
4.2026	Ibid.	La Carrera al Rearme y La Iglesia (24)
4.2027	Pastoral Institute, Nigeria	Ecumenical collaboration at the Regional, National & Local Levels, by the Sec. for Promoting Christian Unity. (34)
4.2028	IDOC	Uhuru and Harambee: Kenya in search of freedom and unity. (82)
4.2029	Catholic Relief Services	Upper Volta Program. (4)
4.2030	Ibid.	Cameroon Program. (3)
4.2031	Ibid.	Honduras Program. (2)
4.2032	Ibid.	Togo Program. (2)
4.2033	Ibid.	Peru Program. (3)
4.2034	Ibid.	Ecuador Program. (3)
4.2035	Ibid.	Dominican Republic Program. (5)
4.2036	Ibid.	Lesotho Pre-School Conference held at Agricultural Collogo. (29)
4.2037	The Tablet	Latin American hopes, by P.A. Maurovich. (2)
4.2038	USG	Verbale Commissio VI. (8)
4.2039	Christian Medical Commission (WCC)	Annual Meeting 1972. (64)

B. Code No.	Organization	Title of Document (no. of pages in brackets)
4.2040	International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods, Iran.	The Design of educational programmes for the social and economic promotion of rural women. (270)
4.2041	Centre for Society and Religion, Sri Lanka	Aftermath of Estate Nationalisation. (4)
4.2042	MARC	How to Prepare: A Status of Christianity Profile, an Unreached People Survey. (19)
4.2043	Ibid.	Planning Strategies for Evangelism, by E.R. Dayton. (27)
4.2044	Ibid.	You can so get there from here, 1975-76 edition. (19)
4.2045	RSAT, Tanzania	Religious Superiors' Association of Tanzania Newsletter. (4)
4.2046	Centro pro Unione, Rome	Conferences 1976: A Prophetic Theology (1)
4.2047	Centre for Society and Religion, Sri Lanka	The Nationalisation of Estates in Sri Lanka and the Responsibility of the Churches abroad. (2)
4.2048	USC Commission "Justice and Peace"	USC Commission "Justice and Peace" by Stephen Tutas, Sf. (2)
4.2049	Ibid.	Rapport sur les Activités de la Commission. (3)
4.2050	Bishops' Institute for Social Action, Tokyo	Report of the Second Bishops' Institute for Social Action. (25)
4.2051	UN	Nouvelles brèves. (4)
4.2052	Cana Movement, Malta	Marriage and Family Planning, by M. Emyan. (40)
4.2053	Inter Documentation Co., Switzerland	Reviewing the International Order Interim Report. (microfiche)
4.2054	MARC	Status of Christianity Country Profile: Bolivia. (6)
4.2055	Ruhr Wort	Der Weg in die Zukunft, by Karl Rahner. (2)

II. PERIODICALS

A. Internal

Issue	Name of Periodical and Institute publishing it
Nos. 240 and 241	AIMIS (FSCJ et al.)
No. 12	ANS (SDB)
Vol. 55, No. 3	Bulletin (FSC)
Nos. 9 and 10	Chronica (CICM)
No. 8	CIFOC (OCarm)
No. 11	Da Casa Madre (INC)
No. 91	Echos de la rue du Bac (MEP)

<u>A. Issue</u>	<u>Name of Periodical and Institute publishing it</u>
Vol. 8, No. 8	Euntes (CICM)
No. 294	Famiglia Comboniana (FSCJ)
No. 22	FMM Documentation
No. 31	FMM Information Service
Vol. 44, No. 3	The Master's Work (SSpS)
No. 40	Missionari Saveriani (SX)
Nos. 22 and 23	Missioni Consolata (IHC)
No. 24	Mondo e Missione (PIME)
No. 8	MSC General Bulletin
No. 23	Nigrizia (FSCJ)
No. 10	Notiziario Cappuccino (OFMCap)
No. 9	Information (RSCJ)
No. 62	OMI Documentation
No. 113	OMI Information
No. 17/18	Piccolo Missionario (FSCJ)
No. 27	SJ Information
Nos. 11 and 12	SJ News and Features
No. 28	SMA
No. 203	White Fathers-White Sisters (PA-SA)
No. 1	En Famille (CICM)

B. External

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Name of Periodical</u>
Vol. 4, No. 4	ADRS Newsletter
Vol. 16, No. 24	Africa Confidential
Nos. 1886-1891	Agenzia Internazionale FIDES Informazioni
No. 11/75/2	AMECEA Documentation Service
Vol. 4, No. 2	Bulletin of the CISS
Vol. 4, No. 1	CEM Mondialità
October and December	Christian Leadership Letter
Nos. 43-47	Circular (USG)
No. 19	Communications (WCC)
No. 20	Contact (CMC) French edition
Nos. 13 and 14	Contact (CMC) Spanish edition
Vol. 3, No. 9	Development Forum
Nos. 540-583	Documentation and Information for and about Africa
No. 1687	La Documentation Catholique
No. 5/6	Ekumenisk Orientering - Aktuell
No. 3	Ekumenisk Orientering - Mission and Evangelism
Nos. 32-37	EPS (Ecumenical Press Service)
No. 20	GABA Newsletter
Vol. 14, No. 3	Good Tidings
Vol. 10, No. 12	Impact (Philippines)
No. 12	Informatiedienst

<u>B. Issue</u>	<u>Name of Periodical</u>	
No. 14	Information Bulletin (Multimedia)	
No. 42	Informissi	
No. 3	Inter Caritas	
Vol. 10, No. 6	Kontinenti	
No. 29	Letters from Asia	
No. 24	MEB Today	
No. 268	Messages du SecOurS catholique	
No. 23	Messis	
No. 6	Migration News	
No. 3	Migrations dans le monde.	
No. 45	MISEREOR Aktuell	
December	News Notes	(AFFRO)
No. 11	Notes and Comments	(Agrimissio)
Vol. 12, No. 5	Noticeial	
Vol. 8, No. 2	One Spirit.	
No. 11	One World.	
No. 86	Peuples du Monde	
No. 57	Pro Hundi Vita (French edition)	
November-December	Report *	(World Bank Group)
November	Report from DMU	
No. 566	Revista de Misiones	
Vol. 17, Nos. 47-49	Ruhr Wort	
No. 29	SSRC Newsletter	
Nos. 7065 and 7066	The Tablet	
No. 3	UCIP Informations	
August	World Need Survey	

C. Selected Articles

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Title of Article</u> (Number of pages in brackets)
2.FSC (B55/3/75)	<u>International Commission of Catechesis</u> , By Br. Genaro S. de Ugarte. In BULLETIN FSC, Vol. 55, No. 3, 1975. (3)
2.MEP (ERB91/75)	<u>Perola: Une paraisse au Brésil</u> , by Théo Briand. In ECHOS DE LA RUE DU BAC, No. 91, 1975. (6)
2.MEP (ERB91/75)	<u>Colloque européen sur la Chine</u> , by Léon Trivière. In ECHOS DE LA RUE DU BAC, No. 91, 1975. (2)
2.PIME (Mem24/75)	<u>Filippine: una Chiesa si converte</u> , by Franco Cagnasso. In MONDO E MISSIONE, No. 24, 1975. (20)
2.PIME (Mem24/75)	<u>Senza Croce non c'è Missione</u> , by Joseph Masson, SJ. In MONDO E MISSIONE, No. 24, 1975. (7)
2.CICM (E8/8/75)	<u>Models of Poverty</u> , by G.R. Grosh. In EUNTES, Vol. 8, No. 8, 1975. (10)
2.RSCJ (I5/9/75)	<u>Regional Assembly Africa</u> . In INFORMATION, Vol. 5, No. 9, 1975. (16)
2.SMA (S28/75)	<u>L'Evangelisation dans la Corresponsabilité</u> . In SMA, No. 28, 1975. (10)

C. Code No. Title of Article (Number of pages in brackets)

5.B(CISS) The Basis of Dialogue, by Donald G. Dawe. In BULLETIN OF THE
(4/2/75) CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE OF SIKH STUDIES, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1975. (6)

5.CT The Making of Community, by Paul Philibert, OP. In GOOD TIDINGS,
(14/3/75) Vol. 14, No. 3, 1975. (5)

5.LfA Eastern Mysticism, by William Johnston et al. In LETTERS FROM
(29/75) ASIA. No. 29. 1975. (16)

5.M Indonesia verso il 2000. In MESSIS, Vol. 27, No. 23, 1975. (3)
(27/23/75)

5.N La Chiesa in Etiopia, by Cirillo Tescaroli. In MESSIS, Vol. 27,
(27/23/75) No. 23, 1975. (2)

III. BOOKS

A. Internal

Code No. Institution Title of Book (number of pages in brackets)

3.106 CSSP Missionari Comboniani 1975. (137)

B. External

Code No. Publisher or Author Title of Book (number of pages in brackets)

6.471 Christian Institute Man and the Universe of Faiths, by
for the Study of M.M. Thomas. (161)
Religion and Society,
India.

6.472 U.I.L. Issues in the Struggle for Justice, by
Frank Whalardas and Nawaz Dawood. (61)

6.473 Documentation-Infor- The Catholic Church in Indonesia. (95)
mation Department,
Indonesia.

6.474 Orbis Books, Mary- Polygamy Reconsidered, by Eugene Hillman,
knoll. CSSP. (266)

6.475 Paulist Press, Bread for the World, by A. Simon. (179)
U.S.A.

** From TIME Magazine's 'Men (Women) of the Year' issue we take the following note, **
** concerning Bishop Kholoka who gave us "The Church in Tanzania and its Ujamaa **
** Experience" in SEDOS, SEDOS 76/609. (TIME, Europe, December 29, 1975) **

** "So many religious people, good works are not enough in face of the **
** world's cruel inhumanity. They seek social solutions. Tanzanian Bishop Christo- **
** pher Kholoka, a Black and a Catholic, sees a solution and basic Christian value **
** in the ujamaa cooperative villages. A member of the Nyabihanga ujamaa village in **
** his diocese, Bishop Kholoka spends two weeks of each month at work in the fields, **
** barefoot and dressed in a shirt and dungarees. He argues that the cooperative **
** way is a practical way to imitate the life of the Trinity, a life of sharing!" **
