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We look forward to seeing all SEDOS members at the General Assembly on 1 December, 1976. The position papers of Father Zago, O.M.I., Father Divarkar, S.J., and the second part of the paper by Father McGourn, M.M., (cf. 1 October BULLETIN for the first part) will be distributed at the second Preparatory meeting.

S. Joan Delaney, M.M.

This issue

1. EVANGELIZATION AND WESTERN CULTURES	384
2. FLESH OF INDIA'S FLESH	393
3. U. N. FACTS	399
4. REVIEW: Some Recent Articles Concerning Inculturation	400
5. SOUTH AFRICA TODAY	403

Coming Events:

Replies to invitations due back in the Secretariat. . . . .19 November  
Comments and questions on the position papers are  
due back in the Secretariat . . . . .25 November

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Executive Committee meeting at SEDOS at 4:00 p.m. . . . .24 November  
CEVAM meeting: Generalate of the School Sisters  
of Notre Dame. . . . . 25, 26, 27 November

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\*GENERAL ASSEMBLY: Christian Brothers Generalate, 8:45a.m....1 December

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**SEDOS - SERVIZIO DI DOCUMENTAZIONE E STUDI**

We are grateful to Sister Ramona, IOI, A Sedos delegate, for her translation of the following article on the theme of the December Assembly - "Inculturation".

EVANGELIZATION and WESTERN CULTURE

by

Fr. Alberto Antoniazzi.

1. The Synod of 1974 and the Encounter of the Gospel with the Cultures.

The 1974 Synod of Bishops, whose theme was "evangelization", could not produce a final synthesis. Neither could it produce a document of clear directives for action.

Is this astonishing? Some say that this outcome cannot but be justified: the material offered to the Pope by the Synod was very vast and very interesting. The theme was far too ample for the Synod Fathers to reach neat conclusions in a month's work. Certain instruments and methods of work also were lacking to elaborate the conclusions. . . (1) Others suggest that this lack of conclusions had a more profound reason: the Church of today has its own difficulty in defining its lines of action with regard to evangelization. (2)

In any case, what is important is not that the Bishops' Synod elaborate conclusions, but **that** they come to answer the real problematic of the Church which can be assimilated by all. That is why we judge it extremely important for all Christians to discuss the problematic that emerged in the Synod and to contribute towards the clarification of the pastoral conclusions that it demands.

However, the dimensions of this present work do not permit us to delve into the complexity of the theme, except very schematically. We try to put in relief the questions that appear really essential to us. These questions situate themselves around the sole nucleus - the encounter of the "Gospel" with "cultures". Therefore, we shall treat this topic first rapidly, in general terms, then more amply, in concrete terms, analyzing the relation between the Gospel and "Western culture".

Through the present work in its entirety, we shall try to prove that the theme of the encounter of the Gospel and cultures is the same as the central theme of the 1974 Synod and of evangelization today. (3)

2. The Gospel and Culture.

The term "evangelization" elicits the notion of diffusion of the Gospel and its penetration of cultures. By "culture", we understand here what the anthropologists and sociologists consider the "system of life models, explicit and implicit", of a social group. In other words, its language, concepts, beliefs, norms and values, as well as its activities - economic, social, artistic, etc - all of which form a certain coherent whole.

But from the start, it is necessary to clarify that a culture affects evangelization in two aspects. On one hand, it is evident that evangelization, in its diffusion, meets and eventually clashes with diverse cultures. Although, on the

other hand, we may not underestimate the oft-forgotten fact that the Gospel is itself transmitted through a language, a conception of the world, an organization, norms, etc., in sum: through a culture. (4) With all these, the question merits deeper reflection and a decisive clarification. We say: the Gospel transmits itself through a culture. We do not say: the Gospel is (reduces itself to) a culture.

The "Gospel" is the announcement of a happening, that of Christ who transcends and is above cultures and human history. The Gospel is the announcement of an outburst of God's initiative in the history of man. The Gospel would lose all its meaning and all of its originality if cut off from its divine origin, that is, if it ceases to become the announcement of the presence of God in Jesus, who died and rose from death and consequently, in its proper perspective, also in the Church, the "sacramental" community of the presence of Jesus in history.

But, at the same time, the happening of Jesus, the presence of God, manifests itself in history and communicates itself through a human culture. Jesus died and resurrected, as is said in the Creed, "under Pontius Pilate", that is, in a definite year in our history, in a country - not in ours, under one specific political regime, in that religious and social context, and not in ours. . . . Jesus preached to the Jews in their language, and in a form that was appropriate to them. Being also a universal message directed to all men, this news could not but allow itself to pass through a particular language and culture in order to be communicated. (5)

A second observation is that this encounter between the "Gospel" and "culture" may not be conceived as static. The Gospel utilizes a culture to communicate its divine message, to reveal the plan of God, but to do this it must, necessarily adopt this culture, "convert it", make it its instrument, make it transparent (and without obstacle) so as to reflect its true image. Jesus used the religious language of the Jews, the tradition of the Old Testament, to re-direct Judaism. So every culture which would open itself to the Gospel can only receive it in a dynamic attitude, accepting to be transformed, "converted", purified, by it.

The history of the Church as history of the diffusion of the Gospel, can be seen, before all else, from this angle - of the encounter between the Gospel and cultures. In this encounter, on one hand, we see the bringers of the Gospel - the apostles - force themselves to translate the Gospel in the different languages, adapting it to new situations, and on the other hand, we see the different peoples and the different cultures reacting more or less favorably, more or less rapidly, changing their customs, and life styles under the impact of Christian revelation.

A rapid allusion to this history allows us to understand better how we can situate today the relation of the "Gospel" to "western culture".

### 3. The Gospel and Western Culture

The first conflict, conscious and explicit, between the Gospel and culture took place when the Christian apostles found their way to the West. In the different happenings that had taken place, we have a better understanding of those linked with the activities of the Apostle Paul, which the New Testament had preserved for us in the Epistles and other records, for example, the Acts of the Apostles. Hence we are told that the conflict had already exploded in Jerusalem itself when the Gospel was

accepted by the Greek-speaking Jews (cf. the story of the Hellenists led by Stephen, Acts 6 and ff.).

Basic to the conflict was the question: did the new converts to Christianity have also to assume, together with faith in Christ, the customs (the "culture") of Judaism? Several answers were possible: Yes, said the "Judaizers"; it is not possible to become Christian without becoming fully Jewish. No, answered others; a new epoch had arrived, that of adoring God in "spirit and truth". Faith in Christ does not need anything of the past. Finally, there were possible solutions of compromise, for example that which prevailed in the Council of Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15: 5-29), demanding from the new Christians only the respect towards a few basic precepts of Judaism that can be considered as a species of "natural law". (6)

Today, we have difficulty in gauging the depth of this conflict. We know little about the Christians who remained more intimately linked with Judaism, to the point of separating themselves later from the one "Catholic" Church. Many of the documents that we possess represent, in fact, the view-point that triumphed (substantially that of St. Paul) and showed the conflict as overcome. But, as the studies of exegetes and historians on these first decades of Christianity progress, the situation of pluralism becomes always more evident - many a time of profound divisions, of conflict, leading to mutual persecutions between the different groups of Christians confronted with the difficult problem of the relations with Judaism.

The adaptation of the Graeco-Roman world, so difficult for Christianity in the first and the second centuries, seems to have been substantially resolved in the third and the fourth centuries. It is in this epoch that theology, liturgy, ecclesiastical organization developed in the form which through the centuries to the present day, is destined to build itself up as the model for the Western and the Eastern Church. (7) On the part of some scholars, however, there arose a suspicion that the "hellenization" of Christianity had gone much too far. The effort to adapt the message of the Gospel to Hellenistic and Roman culture would have resulted in a betrayal of the proper essence of Christianity. Theology, especially, in its contact with Greek metaphysics could have been diverted from its correct orientation.

In reality, historians and theologians give their consensus to the contrary opinion. It seems sufficiently clear that the "Fathers of the Church" did not allow themselves to be seduced by Greek thought and corrected this philosophy, thus turning it into an adequate instrument for the expression of Christian dogma. (8)

With all these considerations, it is opportune to remember that at this stage, we are entering into the area of the debatable, where judgement must be exercised with greater prudence. In fact, we are still too deeply involved in Western Christianity to be able to judge it more objectively. We run the risk of not seeing correctly, of erring through short-sightedness. We are still too much accustomed to judge everything as certain in our Western Christianity to be able to perceive its eventual deformations and deviations. Not that we totally lack the conditions for passing fair judgement, but we have to be conscious that there are still many divergencies in the interpretation and evaluations of the history of Western Christianity. It is sufficient to recall the conflict, today on the way towards solutions, between Protestantism and Catholicism in our modern era (the 16th to the 20th centuries).

Besides the questions which are strictly theological, there had been and there is a conflict on the evaluation of the history of the Latin Church. For some, the Latin Church moved away from true Christian tradition; for others, however, only she possesses the true Christian tradition.

Here we can only recall two orientations in recent historical studies that strive to base the unilateral and simplistic judgements that are made, also within the Catholic group, up to the latter decades. On one hand, the studies on the religious history of the Western medieval times put in relief the pluralism of "Christianities". Instead of one unique medieval Christianity, strongly unified, firmly directed by the Popes and intellectually orientated by Scholasticism, many diverse forms of "popular" Christianity emerged, fruits of the encounter of the evangelizing mission of the Church with diverse cultural situations. There are more diversities and "heresies" than have been depicted in a romantic picture of the Middle Ages. There are many diverse ways of conceiving and living Christianity. (9) And even if through the pastoral work which lasted for centuries the final result was a European Christianity much closer to Canon Law and to the models of religious and spiritual life approved by the authorities of the Church, the real Christianity lived by the people allowed itself to be profoundly marked by one particular culture, be it regional or local. Evidently, therefore, these forms were deterred from being considered as universal, valid for all, in all times and places. On the other hand, historians and theologians ask themselves if even the elements of official Catholicism, approved by the hierarchy of the Church and imposed by them as much as possible all over the West, were not marked too much by their cultural origins. We have already made allusions to a possible influence of Greek philosophy on dogmatic theology. Others discuss the excessive impact that a "Roman conception" of religion would have left on the Western Church, exaggerating the role of law and politics in ecclesiastical institutions. (10) It is not necessary to insist on this theme, which had been debated on so often during the Second Vatican Council, which had reverted, not always explicitly, as predominant orientations up till then, exactly in this juridical and political aspect.

In sum, the Latin Church's own history, seen today with critical eyes, reveals the important influence of "cultural" factors on the history of Christianity. And this is not astonishing. It could not be otherwise. But this involved the putting up of a historical phase of Christianity or a single cultural form as the universal and unique model, valid for all times and places. Undoubtedly, however, the problem of the "relativity" of the historical experience of Western Christianity would not have been pinpointed more clearly if it had not met with radically different cultures. As we know, this encounter was experienced since the 16th century when the Spanish and the Portuguese galleons, then later the Dutch and the English, established frequent contacts between Christian Europe and the peoples of Asia, Africa and America.

It is not fitting here, in a few lines, to pass judgement on more than three centuries of complex history. It is certain that, within the exigencies of evangelization of the ancient and withdrawn civilizations, like those of India and China (who considered themselves as superior to the Western "barbarians"), or to those cultures poorly developed on a material level (like the greater part of Africa and America), the missionaries tried different solutions and did not lack in exemplary

trials for the "acculturation" of Christianity. But, on the whole, specially from the beginning of the 18th century until 1919, there prevailed an attitude of imposing the Western religious and ecclesiastical model as the unique expression that is valid for Christianity. The negative solution for the "question of the rites" and the lack of an "indigenous" clergy significantly express Western ethnocentrism, that is, the belief in the intellectual and moral superiority of the West. (11) Paradoxically, this period is also that of the most despotic and ravaging colonialism, so that a precarious association established itself, objectively, between colonial oppression and exploitation, on one side, and Christianity, on the other. (12) That which in our eyes today seems absurd was practised with good intentions by many missionaries up till the most recent times. If the penetration of Christianity has been minimal in India and China, it was because of the objective factors. It would have been still less, but for the intrinsic value of the evangelical message and the self-abnegation of many missionaries. (13) In Africa, the penetration of Christianity, was more extensive, certainly also because there was less resistance from its cultural traditions. However, it is necessary to recall that, behind the apparent triumph of Christianity in many African regions, many syncretic movements of Christianity arise with the ancestral traditions giving origin to numerous separate "sects" or "churches". Lately, the defense of African culture gave rise to a political programme of the governments of different countries and in the name of African "authenticity", Christian (and Western) names and practices have been rejected. (14)

This description which we have just made, however rapidly, seems to us more than sufficient to show the importance of the relation Gospel-culture and to introduce some theological-praxis reflections, which we now present to conclude this work.

#### 4. Theological-Praxis Reflections

The problem of the relation Gospel-culture remains more than ever an open one. Not only has there been no effective and practical solution (we cannot arrive at this definitely except at the Parousia for in the development of history, the Christian impregnation of the cultures remains always open and incomplete), but its theoretical position does not seem sufficiently clear. (15)

In our view, the first avenue towards a solution is in the full recognition of the anthropological dimension of this problem. We will explain ourselves, taking up again the initial observations given in this paper. The Gospel, we say, is not to be reduced to a culture. Its originality is exactly in its transcendent, divine origin. But at the same time the Gospel only communicates itself through a culture. So, the encounter of the Gospel (and of the community that brings it, the Church) with the cultures falls under the laws that govern the encounter among human cultures, although it does not reduce itself only to this. Here, anthropology can teach us something important and fundamental about the modalities of the encounter among cultures. . . What type of process provokes a fruitful cultural exchange, which permits a type of culture to assimilate and re-express the Gospel without being destroyed and which permits the Gospel to reveal new aspects of its (the culture's) indissoluble riches through the encounter with a new culture or human experience, without being deformed or impoverished?



Anthropology has something to say, it is true. But not a single guarantee exists for the infallibility of anthropology, which more than other sciences, is subject to the deformations of the ideological context in which it develops. Hence, in the use of this science, we must have recourse to a critical analysis, in which theology as such can contribute. To avoid starting from a preconceived partiality for a culture, at the cost of disfavoring other cultures, theology should seriously take up the ancient biblical principle that God "has no favourites" (Rom. 2: 11; Eph. 6: 9; Col. 3:25; James 2: 1; I Peter 1: 17; cf. IIChron. 19: 7). We have to show equal interest in the culture of every people. We have to make efforts so that the predominance of the West in its relation to other cultures, however hidden or surreptitious, does not insinuate itself anew.

The central nucleus of a theology which allows an authentic dialogue between the Gospel (and the Church) and cultures already exists, for example, in Section 44 of the Constitution "Gaudium et Spes". Perhaps, what is still lacking is the drawing up of obvious conclusions. (17)

A second avenue towards a solution is in becoming aware of the values of non-Christian religions in the history of salvation. Religion (understood in the latent sense) is a central element, as such extremely significant, in a culture. The attitude of many theologians and missionaries of the past was particularly negative in the confrontation with non-Christian religions and eventually reaching the point of the absurd, by accepting other elements of a culture, but rejecting exactly that which is its religion (we can say its "soul").

The Second Vatican Council, taking up again the most ancient teachings (of many of the Church Fathers, for example), and the more recent movements of theological renewal, judged it necessary to revert to the current opinion on the salvific value of non-Christian religions. (18) Rediscovering the full amplitude of the plan of God and of His salvific action in the history of men, the Council Fathers have come to consider religions not as obstacles to Christianity, but as a preparation for it, although very often, ambiguous and remote. We cannot forego taking note of the profound change of mentality that has taken place in a few years, from considering religions as "works of the devil" to the words of Paul VI in the opening of the last Synod: that (other) religions must be seen "not as rivals nor as obstacles to evangelization, but as worthy of human consideration and esteem".

This truth also holds, partly for some other teachings, which recently rediscovered, did not yet have the time to show all its consequences. But these consequences, undoubtedly, will be decisive in the transformation in fact of the relation: Gospel-cultures.

A third avenue, that we also wish to mention rapidly is the necessity of revising our ecclesiology and of restoring the local Churches to their effective stability and responsibility, as an institutional prerequisite, for the authentic realization of the encounter of the Gospel with cultures. The last Synod of Bishops has been sufficiently clear in this respect. (19) We believe, without a single doubt, that an excessive centralization of the Catholic Church in our actual models signifies, in fact, an imposition of "Western" criteria and ways in the encounter of the Gospel with the diverse cultures. This signifies westernism, ethnocentrism, in sum, sacrifici-

cing the Gospel to a privileged culture to the detriment of the others.

With all these considerations, we do not want to leave the impression that all difficulties would be resolved when some changes are made in Canon Law or in the actual centralizing tendencies in the Church. In reality, every encounter of the Gospel with a culture (and concretely with a social group, or with the persons who are its bringers) is a drama, an adventure, whose ending is not necessarily always a happy one. The Gospel can be refused, deformed or assimilated more or less profoundly. We strongly believe that the Gospel has to be communicated faithfully and received in all its plenitude. We know also that it is not easy to evangelize and to allow the Gospel to impregnate totally the life of a person, of a group or of a society. (The West, especially today, could not present itself as a faithful model of the Gospel). We know also that we can count on the grace of God and on the Gospel's own power. There still remains the problem of how, concretely, we can articulate better our work of evangelization, the relation between the Gospel and cultures, between the universal Church and local Churches, between the situation of today and Tradition.

We would like to make a last observation, exactly from the viewpoint of the notion (anthropological) of "culture". Often we see how, for example, on the occasion of the preparation of the last Synod, many were preoccupied with the establishment of what is the "essence" of the Gospel, what constitutes its characteristic and original contents, what can be and cannot be effectively affirmed as basic to it. This preoccupation is legitimate, at least partly, and is already expressed in different ways in the history of the Church (in the formulae of "creeds", the profession of faith, dogmas, catechism, etc.); but which to us seems at times to envelop an illusion. The illusion situates itself, above all, in the level of the understanding and interpretation of the Gospel. We forget that the Gospel cannot be reduced to a formula of universal value, that would be understood identically everywhere and at all times. Every formulation expresses itself in a language, refers to a context, is within a culture. In order to pass to another culture and to another historical situation, the Gospel must be "interpreted", translated (in the strong sense of the term). When making a mechanical transposition, one can have the illusion that the original formula is kept, whereas in reality, the true meaning is lost. We can remain with a letter (dead) and lose the spirit.

If the Gospel were reducible to "formulas" that are mechanically transmitted, from one generation to another or from culture to culture, then the teaching function of the Church would become unnecessary. There will be no need for a living community to understand or re-express in one's historical context the singular message of Christ, "Hic et hodie ipse et in saecula" (Heb. 13: 8). A community of the Church will also be unnecessary if the problem were only to transmit "formulas" of the past, a catalogue of truths and errors. In reality, the Gospel, by its nature, is at the same time the news of a happening which is already realized (Christ who died and resurrected) and a call to conversion, to transform one's life in function of the Kingdom of God "which is near". Therefore, evangelization seems to us basically a re-interpretation of culture, of every culture (that is, life model), in function of the happening that is Jesus Christ, and as a revelation, at the same time, of that which the grace of Christ can awaken in diverse historical situations and cultures.



Likewise, from a pedagogical viewpoint, we can doubt the utility of insisting on a "catalogue of truths", above all outside of a vital context, in which the Gospel appears like a doctrine of the past instead of what it is: challenge to live the present in a different manner, re-interpreting the total meaning of existence.

##### 5. Applications in the Brazilian Situation

Does Brazil belong to a Western culture or civilization? Does the problematic evoked since long until presently interest us also. . . ? If we recognize that other nations and other cultures have the right to live Christianity in "their own way" (G S 44), then the question can be raised: is Western Christianity the most adequate form for Brazil?

Jean Labbens, in his "Sociological Introduction" to the book of Candido Procopio de Camargo on "Sociological Aspects of Spiritism in Sao Paulo" (Meres, Friburgo-Bogota, 1961), wrote:

Christianity is the religion of the West. Here all religious life is dominated, effectively, by the major Christian religions. At first glance, Brazil does not differ in anything, in this respect, from other Western nations. . . . The Christians here are almost 97 per cent of the population. . . . This impression, however, is superficial and misleading. In the first place, one cannot but notice at every instant the importance that the religion of the mediums has in Brazilian culture. . . . There are important and original religious phenomena in Brazil which are in contradiction with the general tendencies in Western countries. Christianity is losing ground; the religions of the mediums, on the contrary, register a continuous and rapid progress. . . . In brief, it seems that a new and major religion is on the way of being constituted, spiritism being its most developed form. And up to the present, one can say that, under the appearances of Catholicism this religion constitutes, in fact, the true religion of Brazil. (20)

We can disagree with this sociologist. But today, fifteen years after this had been written, we cannot negate the extent and the importance of the religious phenomena that escape the "control" of official Catholicism. This fact and others, which we are in no condition to discuss here, seem sufficient to show the necessity for the Church in Brazil to be preoccupied much more than ever with its own "acculturation", with its own "abrasileiramento", with a more authentic relation with the culture and religiosity of the people.

The religious, who, since the Middle Ages, have always had an outstanding role in evangelization and missionary work, must, in the face of the actual problematic of the Church, add a new lucidity to their usual generosity. Being conscious, very often, of having acted in the name of the universal Church and of being organized as "multinational" congregations (most strongly linked with their European matrices), they acted according to a conception of evangelization that has never sufficiently respected the cultures or the local values. Today, they must discover more clearly the demands of an authentic encounter between culture and the Gospel.

This rediscovery implies also that the action of the religious must be associated more intimately with the particular Churches or local communities, where the diocesan clergy have maintained sometimes a more profound identification with the people. With the strengthening of these relations, that we believe we are far ahead in Brazil than in the other particular Churches, we can expect an evangelizing action that is more authentic and more complete, which, in full availability to the Gospel and to its universal dimension, will incarnate itself effectively in the particular conditions of the evangelized communities.

Translated from Portuguese - *Convergência*, June, 1975, VII - No.82.

(Translator's note: The footnotes are in the original text. They have not been translated.)

. . . . .

FLESH OF INDIA'S FLESH

by

SAMUEL RAYAN

The thing has been called by many names. It has been called adaptation, accommodation, assimilation, indigenization, acculturation and, more recently, inculturation. All the names carry a suggestion of external adjustments, or paternalistic concessions. Some even smack of missionary diplomacy, strategy and tactics. There is behind them all a conscious or unconscious assumption that the Christian belief, the Christian way of living and worshipping and the Christian Church are something ready-made, finished, acquired and established; now they need only to adjust themselves to new situations, accommodate themselves to the ethos of new nations or take root in local cultures. The possibility of their being deeply affected, powerfully challenged, changed and enriched by meeting with different religions and cultures is rarely, if ever, envisaged.

Another word used to describe the thing is incarnation. It has been used boldly, hesitantly, on and off. Both the boldness and hesitancy are associated with the use of the term for the mystery of Jesus as hinted at in John I. 14, and the Word became flesh and came to dwell among us; and in Hebrews 2. 17-18, he had to be made like these brothers of his in every way and has passed through the test of suffering; 4. 15, because of his likeness to us, he has been tested in every way; 5. 7-10, in the days of his earthly life he offered up prayers and petitions, with loud cries and tears; because of his humble submission his prayer was heard. Some would reserve the word incarnation for this basic mystery and insist on clarity and distinction of ideas. Others find incarnation the aptest language and symbol for understanding and expressing reality as seen by Christian faith. We take the incarnation, both word and thing, sign and reality, seriously in all its rich and endless resonances.

## LIKE US IN EVERY WAY

The fact is that there is never a self-gift or self-disclosure of God but in terms incarnational. Nature and men - both being God's self-revelation and self-communication - are the term and embodiment of his creative Word of Love. The ultimate incarnation and definitive revelation of this Word of redemptive creation is Jesus. Jesus was not simply God's eternal Word in a particular cultural clothing. He was a deeply historical, densely human reality, a sharer in our bodily existence and earthly conditions, flesh of our flesh, man among men, like us in all things though never sinning, never closing himself to God. His body was of this earth, fruit along with us of its evolutionary process. It was not made of incorruptible star-dust in heavenly places and then imported here. It sprang from the depths of our earth and from the depths of a woman, a dear sister of ours. In coming to dwell among us Jesus was not adapting or accommodating anything to anything. He was not inculturating or indigenizing. He was just being himself in his own country and among his people; he was being himself there as the concrete saving presence and self-giving of God to them. When he spoke Aramaic, or used the familiar phrases of the Bible or of robbinic catechesis, when he played with children, or considered flowers and birds and seeds and trees and women and leaven and labour for his parables, when for his Eucharist he picked up bread from the dinner table, he was not planning or

practising inculturation, but just being himself, being human and honest, present and loyal to the here and now in which God had placed him. The actual situation in which he stood was integral to the concrete reality of his human historical bodily self. Had he thought of ordering some exotic food or drink for the celebration of his Eucharist, say from Rome or from Sydney, instead of taking the bread and wine that were on the table before him and were the common food and drink of his people and actually belonged together with them and their hands and homes and fields, he would have acted in a 'discarnate' manner, and betrayed his humanity, and left his concrete world of men and things unredeemed. He would have been equally disloyal to himself and his mission if he had used Latin or Sanskrit instead of the mother-tongue of his listeners in his thanksgiving for the breaking of bread, or in his sayings, stories and parables. His mission and the whole meaning of his bodily existence were to be present, as total openness to God, within the human here and now in order to enable the human in its concrete actuality to open up to God completely. The resurrection is the completion of this incarnational involvement, and not a retreat into some distant heaven of reward and bliss, a leaving of us behind to struggle as best we can. By the resurrection, Jesus is released from the confines of local particularity in order to become really present to the whole of history. It is the fullness of his bodily commitment to historical human existence. He still walks with us as we in our sadness leave Jerusalem and continue our quest. He is where we gather together, he is one with naked and hungry people, he is in the bed-ridden and those detained in prisons. Jesus is the companion of our sojourning till the close of history. And the Eucharist is the 'sacrament' of the total involvement and global presence of the Lord Jesus.

#### LIKE HIM, HISTORICAL AND ENFLESHED

All this holds good for every Church or community of Jesus. The Church is his, and is his body in the measure of the density of its incarnation in concrete local history. Jesus' original disciples were Jews. Their experience of him was coloured, qualified and shot through with their Jewish religious culture, ethos, hopes, sentiments, world-view, self-image and understanding of God and his ways with men. Theirs was a Jewish-Christian faith. Loyalty to Moses, attachment to the temple and the experience of election mediated through circumcision were all interior to their faith in God and in the man Jesus whom they saw as the fulfilment of their history. They needed time and challenges from outside to realize that their concrete experience was destined to become a mission through a paschal transformation. It took them time to see that their Jewish-Christian experience had to die to its local and racial concreteness in order to rise to a global relevance and then realize itself in numberless historical particularities. The dawn of this awareness and the crisis through which it was reached are reflected in several New Testament passages such as Acts 15 and Galatians 2, the long debate at Jerusalem whether or not the Christian faith could possibly become a bodily reality outside the Jewish socio-cultural and religious context. The outcome of this debate marks a passover from closed Jerusalem-Jewish attitudes to the open attitudes and insights of Hellenist Christians of Antioch. Another pointer to the process is met with in Acts 10, the vision of Peter depicting his struggle and his conversion in connection with the question of opening up Church membership to non-Jews like the Romans where cultural and religious sensitivity was very different from that of the Jews. Or again, John 4, illustrates the struggle of the Gospel to realize

its thrust beyond the boundaries of national, racial and institutional conceptions of religion.

That means that Christian faith and life can become, and need to become, historically embodied and present, whether in terms of Jewish beliefs, practices and traditions like circumcision, theosaic law and temple worship, or in terms of other styles of thought and life which tally little with the Jewish. The faith falls like a seed into the folds and furrows of every new historical situation - a new culture, a new age, a new society, and new religious conceptions and sensitivities. There it dies and rises to new existence; and the sapling draws sustenance from the milieu, builds itself up with the human and the religious that is there, and waxes strong in God's light and air without let or hindrance. The faith will bear its own flower and fruit, but in terms of the light, soil and air with which it builds itself, in terms of the situation and the needs, possibilities and experiences of the people whose faith it is. No living thing grows according to rules written down in a book or orders given from far or near. Life develops from within according to its own inner dynamism. Any pruning found necessary is done not for uniformity's sake but to secure greater fruitfulness, and it is done by the responsible, believing, reflecting community itself. There can be no question, then, of importing or exporting ready-made and canned liturgies, theologies, Church-structures and dogmas. These, in the process of the communication of the Gospel, have to keep dying and rising, sprouting and growing afresh in every locality and every age within the context of concrete needs and challenges.

#### RISK: DYING AND RISING

The result will be a splendid pluralism: a great variety of Church-structures, spiritualities, theologies, dogmas, all springing from, and giving expression to, the one mystery of God in Christ Jesus. As there are African realizations of the human, African experiences of life, an African world view and an African art and specifically African religious perceptions, so there will also be, and indeed there already exist, an African Christian faith, African theologies and spiritualities as well as official and unofficial formulations of these. An African theology is not, after all, so absurd as Archbishop Benelli, Papal Under-Secretary of State, is reported to have made out in a speech at Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in February, 1976. It is no more absurd than Western theology as distinct from Eastern both of which, strangely enough, the Archbishop refers to and recommends to African Catholics; no more absurd than Franciscan spirituality as distinct from Carmelite, or a socialist understanding of Jesus as distinct from a capitalist understanding of him. True, "in accepting Christ's message, the African must abandon whatever is essentially incompatible with the Christian faith". So must the European and the American as well. The older the churches the heavier does this duty weigh upon them; and one of the things they will do well to abandon is the tendency to forget the truth that the Holy Spirit is free and cannot be organized, and that his gifts of faith, wisdom, prudence, insight etc., are freely distributed and not concentrated in any particular local church whatever.

There is risk here, both in the incarnation of the faith and in its pluralist expressions. But the risk has to be taken. It is not essentially different from

the risk God took in the incarnation of the Word into a small semitic tribe, in enclosing his message in human languages, in entrusting his memory to a group of very imperfect men. A faith or Church which does not grow from seed or sapling, which does not pass through the risks and pains of growing up, but is ready-made and imprudent, is likely to remain static and sterile. That precisely is what has happened to many a Church in Asia and in India for full four centuries and more.

The dying and the rising, the ever new sprouting and flowering in response to God's ever new Word is the call not only to individuals and their task, but to Churches as well. And it is a problem and a need not only for the Churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America but for the Church on all the continents and everywhere. Enfleshing is part of the programme of updating the Church; this programme is born of the honest admission that much in the Churches at the official, organisational, theological, liturgical and pastoral levels fails to relate meaningfully to the developments, values, sorrows and hopes of the modern world, of young people, of the masses of workers and peasants, of the leaders of science and technology and of the architects of human liberation. Worse still, much of it fails to reflect adequately and present tellingly the views, values and ways of Jesus. The idea of ecclesial incarnation is often tied up with ideas of mission and evangelization. This may legitimately be done only if a mission is understood to include all the continents, all the cities and peoples in them, and all departments of life and activity in today's world. The Church and the faith in Europe and America too have to become incarnate afresh in the new age that has come upon us all, in our self-understanding, in the new culture of freedom, of free search for truth, of human initiative and creativity, of a planned future, of the recognized presence of women and young people, of socialist thought, of common possession of the earth, of the deflation of racist and caste conceit and of the yearning for interiority and meaning.

#### KENOSIS, THE CHURCH'S STYLE OF LIFE

But is it possible, in practice, for the Church to ignore its own history, to by-pass its centuries-long experience, to lay aside its own growth and go back to its beginnings, becoming a seed again in order to rise and live meaningfully in a new age and a new culture? Is it desirable? Will that not be an impoverishment both of the Church and of the world? Should we not rather bring to the new situation the entire wealth of our theological and spiritual insights, our organisational experience, our artistic and liturgical achievements? These questions are not new. They were voiced by Nicodemus when he asked how it was possible for an old man to be born again. Could he enter his mother's womb and be born a second time? The answer is that in every missionary situation, at every turning point in history, at every crisis and cross-roads of cultures, the church with everything that constitutes it, has to be born anóthen (from above, afresh), not by re-entering the womb of the past, but in the Holy Spirit who leads us forward into the newness of a future he is shaping with us by bringing about the birth on our earth of God's Word from a woman. In order to belong to the Kingdom now, the Church with its faith, traditions and missions, has to turn around and become a child, coming to birth again from the womb of new cultures, new ages and newly-encountered religious experiences. It has to be ready for this Kenosis in order to become a redemptive presence in history. Saul's armour may be fine in itself or for Saul; but it does not necessarily serve David's saving purposes,



and therefore it should not be imposed on him. Nor may Saul strip David of his sling and pebbles or prohibit their use. Leave David to listen to God's word in his own heart in his own way and give his own response. The Church's task is to bring to people the Word of God and not also the armour and baggage of past and distant cultures, nor prohibitions and injunctions concerning their own. The word of God judges churches, cultures and religions.

This may have been difficult in the past for lack of a dialectics of evangelization. In a patriarchal, feudal, imperialistic, colonial world, human communication was often a one-way affair; there was no give and take. Authority spoke and people were to submit; the missionary came to teach and not also to learn. He was always the speaker, never the listener. He saw himself as bringing God and Christ, and not also as being brought by them and indeed to them in a new way, even in a challenging and disturbing way. It was taken for granted that the message and the life he was bringing had nothing to gain from a meeting with different religions, cultures and historical situations. But today we have, hopefully, a better understanding of the complexity of the human situation and a fuller theology of the Church, of God's presence in the world, of the relations between creation and redemption and of the universal significance of Christ the Saviour. It is possible now to develop a respectful mutuality and a dialectical relationship between religions, cultures, liturgies and theologies as also between faith and culture, the local Church and the Church universal, and the people and their pastor. The Kenosis implied here for the Church and the faith is no more, no less than the way of incarnational presence which alone can redeem.

It is at times asked whether it is realistic to speak of local Churches and local embodiments of the Gospel when a global culture is actually taking shape before our eyes. But a little reflection will show that what is taking shape is world technology and facilities for global communication. These could be common for human groups whose ethos and sensitivity are nevertheless different. The French and the Germans share the same technology, but not the same jokes. The fact is that along with cosmic technology and, in large measure, necessitated by it, there is developing a search for self-identity in numberless small groups both national and linguistic. The finer and maturer the personality these groups acquire, the clearer and fuller their self-discovery, the greater will their ability be to relate globally, and the better the chances of international integration. It is only the authentic local Church that can be genuinely open to other Churches and be catholic. An incarnate theology will, like a good novel or the parables of Jesus, be more universal than any abstract "theology of the universal church".

It is customary to indicate theology, spirituality and liturgy as three obvious areas for Kenosis and incarnation. Occasionally the structures and laws of the Church are added to the list. But any authentic incarnation of these realities is had only in the measure in which our whole style of life and thought is of a piece with the spirit of the place where we belong and of the people with whom we make community. This includes not only taking to the people's language and art but also living within their socio-economic conditions and sharing their lot with all its limitations and insecurities. Conceptions of inculturation and incarnate existence will be sadly lame if the economic aspects of the question are left out of count. For

many an Indian Christian, joining a seminary or a religious group means both entering a Westernized or hybrid cultural world and climbing to a higher socio-economic level. Multiple walls and gaps are thus created, fragmenting both ecclesial and national communities, and introducing into the Church the non-redemptive principle of discarnation. Large scale and prolonged dependence on foreign funds, so characteristic of the Catholic churches and movements in India (and perhaps in the rest of Asia, and in Africa too) is often due to habits of planning and understanding mission, ministry and life in terms of what is or has been the thinking in European or American circles and in colonial traditions and consequently a lack or neglect of concrete local response to concrete local needs and possibilities. Economic dependence often carries with it spiritual dependence: we seek to oblige and to please: we lay aside our critical instincts and qualms of conscience; our imagination becomes atrophied, and our thinking a copy of what our kind donors think. So we construct buildings, start institutions, initiate projects and open aid programmes which often ill-fit our social landscape, mock our cultural and spiritual sensibilities, isolate us from our people and succeed in presenting the faith and the Church as foreign and culturally-nationally alienating as well as partisan to the powers that be. Is it not an essential part of faith's incarnation that the Church should live within the main stream of the country's political and economic life, benefit from its merits and suffer from its defects like and along with the rest of men, plan and work within the limitations of the actual situation; dissociate herself from exploitative structures, and be ready to forgo her rights if that would make for a more telling witness, and seek to offer a service of understanding and prophecy ?

#### CONCLUSION

It is clear, perhaps, from what has been said that we are not dealing with a few minor adjustments, or peripheral accommodations, or any sort of 12-point programme, or elements and externals of cultures picked up as an additional fringe and frill to our faith and worship. Our concern is with something far more vital and deeper. It is with the insertion of the faith into the life-stream of peoples, and the expression of faith-life in terms of their concrete historical existence, as well as the insertion of the peoples' life into the faith at levels deeper than any of its particular expressions. We are committed to the incarnation of the Gospel and of Christian discipleship in the Indian human situation. The Christian experience that forms the heart of the Gospel should be assumed into the religious experience of our people, and their religious experience assimilated into our central Christian experience, resulting in a single incarnate faith with its own vibration, colour, tonality and sensitivity, its own voice, symbolism and imagery in each place, open at the same time to the vibrations and voices of the embodied faith everywhere willing to be corrected and completed by other realizations of the Gospel and to contribute to the correction and completion of others, knowing that every historical reality has its poverty and its wealth and that both are there for the service and growth of love.

Vidyajyoti  
Delhi.

(Reprinted from JELVADHARA, Vol. 33, 1976.)

The most distant goal is attainable to him who hopes wisely.

Lope De Vega.

## THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

**Overview:-**

The UNDP works with over 140 governments and two dozen international agencies for faster economic growth and better standards of living throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and parts of Europe. To this end, UNDP supports some 8,000 projects in agriculture, industry, education, power production, transport, communications, health, public administration, housing, trade and related fields. These projects form part of three-to-five year "Country Programmes" which are closely linked with overall national development plans. During the next five years, about 80 per cent of UNDP's assistance will go to countries where per capita GNP's are under \$300.

Project work covers five main fields

Surveying and assessing natural resources; industrial, commercial and export potentials, and other development assets.

Stimulating capital investments to help realize these possibilities.

Training in a wide range of vocational and professional skills.

Transferring appropriate technologies and stimulating the growth of local technological capabilities.

Economic and social planning with particular emphasis on meeting the needs of the poorest segments of the population and on development cooperation among neighbouring countries.

Most projects are designed to be "self-continuing", with national personnel taking over all operations as UNDP support phases out.

The UNDP supports over 525 projects in HEALTH CARE and related fields such as NUTRITION, with recipient countries contributing approximately 65p.c. of the cost. Although this work accounts for only 8p.c. of the UNDP outlays, its importance stems from the fact that, throughout the developing world, preventable or curable diseases take the lives of tens of thousands every day, while robbing many times that number of the strength to earn a decent living or maintain normal levels of productivity.

UNDP assists developing nations to increase their efforts to build up small, labour-intensive enterprises that require only limited amounts of capital and technology; to create mutually supporting, "product-related" industries; to foster the establishment of facilities that utilize local resources; and to encourage the decentralization of industry into rural as well as urban areas. The aim is to improve job opportunities, (some 300 million men and women - 40 p.c. of those able to work - are either unemployed, underemployed or earning poverty-level wages) earnings and the availability of goods for both domestic consumption and export.

AGRICULTURE is the largest single component of UNDP activities. In the majority of developing countries agriculture/farming, (forestry and fishing) is still the most important source of jobs, incomes and foreign exchange earnings. The proceeds of agricultural production also provide much of the domestic market and investment capital needed to speed and support industrialization, increased output can best be achieved by improving all aspects of rural life; by stimulating public awareness of, and interest in the critical water situation and how the planet's fixed stock of water can best be managed for domestic, agricultural and industrial use.

EDUCATION and VOCATIONAL TRAINING projects represent nearly one-fifth of all UNDP activities, ranging from work-oriented literacy instruction to university level education in engineering and advanced physics; use of innovation methods including radio broadcasts and satellite television... equipping women for a more rewarding role./ FACTS 76/2-7.

REVIEW: Some Recent Articles Concerning Inculturation - by Sister Mary Motte

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- M. Amaladoss, S.J. "Inculturation: Theological Perspectives", Jeevadhara, (v. 33, 1976), pp. 293-302.
- D.S. Amalorpavadass, "Indigenization and the Church's Liturgy", International Review of Mission, (v. LXV, n.258, 1976), pp. 164-167.
- D. de Floris, "Mystère de l'Incarnation et Culture Contemporaine", Axes: Incarnation et Cultures, (t. VIII, 1976), pp. 7-18.
- O. Dominguez, OMI, "Ecclesial Indigenization Vital Requisite for Catholicism", Omnis Terra, (v. 77, 1976), pp. 285-289.
- I. Omaecheverria, OFM, "The Dogma of the Incarnation and the Adaptation of the Church", Omnis Terra, (v. 77, 1976), pp. 277-283.
- P. Puthanangady, SDB, "Inculturation in Spirit and Worship", Jeevadhara, (v. 33, 1976), pp. 302-311.
- M.J. Rondeau, "L'Évangélisation Dans Le Monde Moderne", Axes: Incarnation et Cultures, (t. VIII, 1976), pp. 3-6.
- A. Seumois, OMI, "Local Clergy and Inculturation of the Church", Omnis Terra, (v. 77, 1976), pp. 293-297.
- J. Stern, MS, "Le Dogme chez J.H. Newman", Axes: Incarnation et Cultures, (t. VIII, 1976), pp. 53-61.
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The above are among those articles which have appeared in recent months dealing either directly or indirectly with inculturation. Among the arguments issuing from the authors, it is possible to discern at least four departure points (not mutually exclusive) for further reflections at various levels which could provide a broader base for the development of inculturation.

1) Theology of the Incarnation.

It is not surprising that the theology of the Incarnation should receive renewed emphasis by just about all of the above authors in the development of thinking about and effecting inculturation in the local/universal Church. And this is so because the process by which the Church enters into a culture and transforms it from within, is more than just analogous to the Incarnation of the Word of God in history, although admitting a fundamental differentiation. (cfr. Amaladoss, de Floris, Omaecheverria). It is precisely, as Omaecheverria shows, the relationship between the Word of God becoming incarnate in history and the impregnation of a culture with His Presence by the Church, that would seem to call for further reflection on the mystery of the Incarnation through a faithful recall of the memory (tradition) of the Church today. (cfr. De Floris). Up to the present there has been a tendency to stress the Incarnation as a "static ontological reality", whereas it needs to be emphasized rather as a "dynamic encounter between God and man at a personal level" if inculturation is to be properly understood and effected. From the viewpoint of encounter, the

role of the Holy Spirit becomes more evident in the entrance of God into the Human community. (cfr. Puthanangady). The cosmological dimensions of the Incarnation, which would seem to be Paul's objective in his letter to the Colossians, and the universalizing of the message which he brought to the early Church, indicates that Christ is the Lord of the Universe. This universality is, however, only achieved because Christ entered into the human community as a man at a particular historical moment and in a specific culture, i.e., in the way God has chosen to speak His Word to man, universality is achieved through initial specificity. (cfr. Amaladoss, Puthanangady). The Word may be proclaimed beginning either with the more cosmological dimension, stressing the eternal procession from the Father, or with the more anthropological aspect, stressing Jesus, the man from Nazareth. Rondeau underlines that Evangelii Nuntiandi begins with the Trinitarian procession, for the Church, following Christ, is as yeast to dough in its relation to the world, and therefore, the relationship Church/world is not dialectical, but rather it is a relation that indicates a processus toward continuing salvation and divinisation of the world. There is a need today to deepen the understanding of the mystical life, especially in the West, and there is a need to stress more the mystery of the Trinity. (de Floris)

## 2) The Use of Symbol.

Amaladoss, Amalorpavadoss and Puthanangady treat specifically of questions related to symbol and/or worship. The penetration of a culture by the Gospel leads to a consideration of symbols which exact the communication of a genuine experience, however feebly at times, since all conditioning inherent in communication of experience is limited. (cfr. Amaladoss). Therefore mere adaptation of some cultural practices can easily lead to a lack of organic unity, which is required if the message is to be truly experienced by a people. (Amalorpavadoss). Symbols must express, if they are genuine symbols, what a people experience in their gradual realization of communion with God who has come among them. In this light spirituality is seen as an on-going process of encountering Love and is expressed in the symbols of everyday life, which means to live in the Spirit, to be aware of God. The spiritual man is the man who has discovered "the process of Incarnation", and his entire life, including his biological life, "becomes spiritual because he is constantly aware that his whole life is tending towards communion with God". (cfr. Puthanangady).

## 3) Dogma and Faith.

In his discussion of Newman's understanding of dogma as that which situates man in relation to God as He really is, Stern explains the idea which Newman had of active and passive infallibility, which could possibly have implications for furthering inculturation. Newman viewed both the transmission and the reception of dogma within the Mystical Body of Christ as the concern of the Holy Spirit, who enlightens both those who teach and those who listen. Likewise, Newman's insistence on faith related to a living word has echos in Amaladoss' argument for a living encounter with the Word of God through inculturation. Newman insisted that an objective and certain knowledge (faith) in dogma could never be assured from texts, whether scriptural in origin or issuing from the Church's magisterium. Living teachers are absolutely necessary if the word, even if it is inspired, is not to remain a dead letter; it must be transmitted by a living spirit to another living spirit.

As Amaladoss points out, the centrality of the dogma of the Incarnation is God's call to love and to the acceptance of the gift of His own divine life, and the response man makes to this call by absolute self-surrender in faith, meaning a commitment to love and the gift of self. This encounter does not take place only within the heart of man, but in the context of history, and therefore in a multi-cultural world the Word of God can only remain alive and effective by means of inculturation each time that the Word comes into contact with a new culture. The logical consequence of this reasoning sees the Church as "leaven transforming cultures from within", and not as a giant "monolith" absorbing all into itself. In other words, the universal Church is seen as a communion of the local Churches.

#### 4) Sending to Mission and Mission Methodology.

Omaecheverria notes that the process of the incarnation of the Church is incomplete so long as the message remains enshrouded in Western garb; it must be "refracted by the prism of Hinduism, Buddhism and other cultural and religious systems". The vitality of incarnating the Gospel has its source in the heart of the mystery of love which impelled God to send his Son among men. The fact that the Church has been sent to unfold Christ's mission in history (cfr. AG 5), leads to an orientation in sending to mission that aims to penetrate more profoundly and more precisely the cultures to which one is sent. (Dominguez). The history of the early Church, and especially of the apostolic times, provides numerous examples of effective inculturation; the deepening of inculturation in the local Church would perhaps benefit from the more itinerant methods - among others - used by the apostles, especially Peter and Paul. (cfr. Seunois).

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### L I F E S T Y L E S

The most widespread lifestyle in the world can be summed up thus: Keep up with the Joneses. If my neighbour has a carabao, land, a colour TV, or a car, then I must have it too.

Today this appetite to acquire, is wetted by a multimillion dollar advertizing apparatus, whose only aim is to persuade us to buy the most unnecessary things, using the most glamorous and sexiest motivation. All of us are subject to this exploitation of our innate acquisitiveness.

If all the money spent on advertizing were put together, it would probably equal or surpass the amounts spent on armaments. Of course all of us eventually pay for these unnecessary expenses, which are used for more of the same. The question is: how desirable really is the consumer lifestyle created by this process? More and more people, and especially the young react against this materialistic view of life, and either withdraw from it all together to join the hippies or other esoteric groups or just decide to live more simply.

Asia's traditions and its great leaders Gandhi and Mao, not to mention Buddha, Confucius and the Hindu sages, have taught a simple way of life closer to nature, glorifying the spiritual and humanistic dimensions of man rather than material things. They have taught us that in simplicity we find freedom, meaning, joy, peace of mind.

**MORE:** joy/simplicity/nature/life/friendship/élan +

**LESS:** stress/bewilderment/technology/money/loneliness/conformity -

(From IMPACT Vol.XI, No.10, 1976).



SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

by  
T. WAITE .

Mr. Terry Waite, Director of the joint Sedos-Agrimissio development Planning Consultation Service, has been a frequent visitor to South Africa over the past six years. Earlier this year he visited the country again to conduct a series of seminars for over 100 black African professional workers. He writes....

In the library of a smart modern building in the Orange Free State sat 15 men, all highly skilled and doing a worthwhile and demanding job. Suddenly one of the group looked out through the window towards the white section of the town. Large houses, spacious gardens and of course the occasional swimming pool. He turned and looked in the opposite direction and way in the distance, screened by a range of trees, the black location was just visible. With sadness in his eyes he looked at me and said, "You know, white visitors to this town would never know that we blacks lived here would they?". "The problem is", said another, "they don't want to know! They need us for our labour but they don't want to know that we are people with feelings, that we have families and that we, too, have dreams for the future". "No wonder", said another, "No wonder that some say, What have we to loose by accepting Communism". The group fell silent and there were anxious glances towards one who had been pointed out to me beforehand as an informer. Once again one realised how terribly difficult it is to have free and open discussion in such a situation.

Later in the day I walked through the location with the Parish Priest. A white mission priest with a totally black parish who survives because of sheer dedicated persistence. We passed the large dormitory blocks provided for the migrant workers from neighbouring countries. Men who for months on end are separated from their families and who during their free time have little to do other than drink, gamble or perhaps start yet another family. It had been raining and the street was full of flooded pot-holes. In some ways of course the location compares favourably with other towns in Africa. The houses are crowded but at least they are holding up! The real position was put to me by a black African priest who commented as follows: 'Politicians and social "leaders" decide our birth-place, formal education, place of worship, jobs, salary-scales, marriage partners, sex relations, economic life, residence, land ownership, health services, recreational facilities, type of housing, civic rights, means of transportation, ethnic affiliation and our leaders. They even determine where you will be buried when you die ! How does that square with article 29 of the Constitution of the Church in the Modern World ?'

The South African situation is immensely complicated and there is no one easy answer. Naturally the different viewpoints and opinions are expressed within the Church. One evening, whilst conducting a discussion group for white leaders from the area in which I was working I listened to a Catholic Religious headmistress of a local Catholic school, vigorously defend segregation in schools because, 'it would be too difficult to make a change'. She was strongly attacked by one of the parents who said, 'Why on earth do you think I send my children to a Catholic school ? Its the one place where I hope that there is at least a chance of them getting a different viewpoint'. Only the other day I received a letter from that same parent. He had

emigrated and that fact illustrates another aspect of the South African problem. Many fine lay leaders find that they cannot continue to bring up their children in such an environment and thus they leave the country.

At another seminar conducted during my visit I noted the remarks of another black African priest and I quote him at length:

"Those who fear the spectre of black consciousness are right in one thing. Once an oppressed people becomes aware of its rightful place in the world, they will inevitably begin to demand the free exercise of their rights. They will want a full participation in the running of their affairs at all levels. You would be very naïve to expect them to accept socio-political and economic structures which deny their full humanity. Hence the nervousness that surrounds the emergence of black consciousness in South Africa. Most of us would argue that it is not enough for people to feel this awareness. It should be articulated verbally, artistically, as well as culturally and institutionally. Our entire approach to life ought to be coloured and characterised by that social consciousness."

I spoke to a Sister whom I have known for many years. For twenty years she has fought for the rights of the black African and she has won many battles. Like all missionaries of her generation she is quiet, determined, gentle and yet as tough as nails! 'We know', she said, quite un-dramatically, 'that if ever a violent revolution comes, then we can expect no special protection; we will certainly be put together along with all the white community.'

On the Sunday morning I could not bring myself to attend the all white mass: with two other friends I went into the location and frankly felt a bit lost and hopeless. We knelt with the congregation and for one moment were united together around the broken body of our Lord. Words quoted during the seminar came to mind - Development cannot be limited to mere economic growth. In order to be authentic, it must be complete or integral, it has to promote the good of every man and of the whole man.

On leaving the country I went to the main Post Office in Johannesburg to send a cable to Ghana. 'Ghana?', queried the counter clerk, 'is that in Africa?'

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A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa - South African Institute of Race Relations

South Africa's Political Alternatives. Report of the Spro-cas Political Commission.

A Taste of Power - Peter Randall.

A Call to Conscience - Document of the South African Catholic Bishops.

Muriel at Metropolis - Miriam Mkhali. A first novel written by a Soweto housewife which records the experiences of a Black person working for a White employer in J/berg.

...

The boldest and most ridiculous hope has sometimes been the cause of extraordinary success.

Vauvenargues.