

CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTS OF MISSION

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(Father Frank Ponsi, a Consolata Father, is teaching sociology in the University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He has tried to make a synthesis of the various concepts of Mission today. This work has of necessity an artificial aspect; it is a framework of reference which can help in grouping together certain scattered ideas and in clarifying a very topical problem. This study was prepared from a questionnaire on the attitude of Sisters in the United States with regard to the missionary activity of the Church. It has been published in *Missiology: An International Review*, Volume VI, No. 2, April 1978).

There might have been beautiful days when all the missionaries all over the world claimed to be engaged in basically the same work, guided by similar motivations and strategies. In today's church such a homogeneity of the missionary enterprise can no longer be assumed. On the contrary, at least five clearly distinguishable ways of articulating the concept of mission have crystalized and are espoused by different groups of missionaries: mission as evangelization, mission as liberation, mission as mutual assistance of local churches, mission as Church, and mission as fulfillment.

These "models" of mission can be logically identified in specific dimensions. Such dimensions were introduced after the sacred/secular and this-worldly/other worldly dichotomies proved to be inadequate as a logical way to account for the five interpretations of mission. These dimensions are:

1. The socio-cultural experience of the proponents of the specific model.
2. The scriptural type or passage according to which they cast and articulate their missionary experience, and the theological assumptions on which this "missiologizing" is done.
3. The goals they identify for the missionary activity.
4. The strategy they suggest or imply.

A word of clarification is in order; my effort is strictly descriptive. Therefore, I will not try to explain why certain people choose a specific model rather than another one, nor what the implications of this choice might be for the individual churches or societies. Such a sociological analysis of mission ideology is beyond the scope of this paper. So also is any evaluation of the various models. It is quite possible that the number of these models in the real world of lived Christian commitment will turn out to be somewhat larger.

Mission as Evangelization

This first model has prevailed through the centuries as the official interpretation of mission (Henry 1962; Ohm 1962; Grasso 1972; Pope Paul 1976). Solidly organized ecclesial communities have perceived and continue to perceive as addressed to them Christ's command: Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned (MK 16: 15-16, Mt 28: 16-20).

In their minds, there is no doubt that conscious faith must be present for salvation to take place, and "...faith comes from what is preached, and what is preached comes from the Word of Christ" (Rm 10:17). Hence, there is no substitute for evangelization that makes a direct confrontation between Christ and every human being possible. This sincere concern for the eternal salvation of people outside the visible boundaries of the Church was, and continues to be, one of the main motivating forces for evangelistic work, regardless of the alleged religious imperialism involved.

Even when this understanding of salvation is no longer deemed tenable in the light of recent biblical and theological reflection, it is this concern for salvation - this time the believers' salvation - that remains the motivating stimulus for relentless evangelistic efforts: Even if we do not preach the Gospel to them, through God's mercy men can still find salvation by other paths; but can we find salvation, if, through negligence, fear, shame...or in consequence of false ideas, we fail to preach it? (Pope Paul 1976: no.80).

Another important assumption associated with this interpretation is the dichotomy, or at least the marked distinction, between the religious and spiritual realm on the one hand, and the material and human realm on the other. Obviously, the priority goes to the religious and spiritual issues (Ohm 1962, vol. 3: 65-66); and salvation is conceived mainly as religious salvation, salvation of the souls and preparation of human beings for eternal life. The following passage is often used to support this approach: "It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food" (Acts 6:2).

According to this theological world-view, the goals of the missionary enterprise are identified in the ministry of the Word to people who yet have not heard the Gospel: The specific purpose of this missionary activity is evangelization and the planting of the church among those people and groups where it has not yet taken root (Abbott 1966; Ad Gentes: 6).

Confronting every individual human being with Christ and his message is the fundamental duty of every established church, so that every man can respond to him in faith and be baptized. "Discipling" and "planting the church" are the long range objectives of missionary work. With baptism, the local church is planted. This church in turn has the duty to reach out and carry on the missionary duty at the local level (Ohm 1962: 273-284; Tshibango 1972). According to a variant of this interpretation, the establishment of the local church in every society and among every people would suffice (Hillman 1966: 6), rather than preaching the Gospel to every human being. Once the Church as the sign of salvation is set up, the goal of the missionary work is achieved.

The strategies adopted to achieve these goals may vary considerably. A first strategy consists of sending missionary specialists to non-Christian lands (Ohm 1962, vol.2: 129-172). The missionaries preach to them the Gospel of Christ and share with them their understanding and interpretation of that Gospel (Ohm 1962, vol. 2: 227-285). People respond to the Gospel through faith and are eventually baptized, thus forming the local church. This is seen as an extension of the mother church (ibid,

vol. 3: 187-189). The process of indigenization and "inculturation" takes place after the local church is established and once it has grown to a certain maturity (Smith 1967).

Catholic strategy will emphasize the setting up of the basic structures of the church and of the sacramental life. The neophyte will first become a Catholic and then, through a progressive intensive formation he will grow as a Christian. The Protestant approach, on the contrary, emphasizes individual conversion as a prerequisite for a redeemed society (Horner 1965). Both approaches insist on "witnessing" as the ordinary means of proselytizing.

An alternative strategy will concentrate on forming local ministers, catechists and evangelizers, who will then form the local churches by winning converts. In all cases, the mission churches will sooner or later become self-supporting and autonomous, both in their leadership and financial base.

The strategy involved in this interpretation of mission does not exclude involvement with economic development, social justice education and the progress of people. These are, however, considered a form of pre-evangelization, a preparatory effort for the announcement of the Gospel (Grasso 1972: 107). Alternatively, they may be considered the natural fruit of the salvation brought by the Gospel. They never become the focus of missionary activity.

The following papal encyclicals have incorporated and officially proposed this interpretation of mission: Maximum Illud, Rerum Ecclesiae (1964), Evangelii Praecones (1951), Fidei Donum (1957), Princeps Pastorum (1959), and the main thrust of Ad Gentes. See also the Declaration of the 1974 Synod of Bishops (Anderson 1975: 259-267), and Evangelii Nuntiandi (Pope Paul 1976).

Similar views are also to be found in "The Evangelistic Witness of Orthodoxy Today" (Anderson 1975: 268-276); in the various commissions on missions of the World Council of Churches prior to the Fourth Assembly (WCC 1968); and in evangelical documents such as The Wheaton Declaration (Lindsell 1966) and The Lausanne Covenant (Douglas 1975: 3-9).

Missions as Liberation

A radically different definition of mission is given by a new wave of theologians and intellectuals. These young voices (average age is well below fifty) are sympathetic observers of participants of revolutionary movements and guerillas (e.g. Gutierrez, Freire, Dussel, Segundo), of development and assistance projects (e.g., W.F. Ryan and J. Komonchak), and of dialogue ventures with official Marxist intellectual elites (e.g., J.B. Metz; Girardi). They conceptualize mission as liberation. The word "development" is alternatively used. However, the latter meets with less success, both because it is not a biblical category (Boberg 1972: 41) and because of its implicit uncritical acceptance of the myth of progress (ibid. and Gutierrez 1973: 21-37).

Matthew 25:31-46 is the key biblical text in which this approach to mission finds its justification and inspiration: "...I was hungry and you gave me to eat" is perceived by these thinkers as the essential paradigm of Christianity, and hence as the meaning of mission.

The selection of this biblical text for a foundation of mission theology is prompted by its intrinsic affinity with the writers' concerns for violated human rights and dignity and by the pervasive social injustice by which it is contradicted. This selection emphasizes the Gospel's basic thrust against concrete blasphemous structures of heteropraxis (Gutierrez 1973: 10) that deny and destroy God's concept of man and society.

Specific assumptions concerning the meaning of the natural and supernatural order, the secular reality and salvation are operative in determining the choice of this biblical paradigm and in shaping the basic features of this mission theology.

These writers operate on the premise of the unity of the natural and supernatural order. They take for granted M. Blondel's, Yves de Moncheuil's and Henry de Lubac's claim that historical man is moving in a world permeated by the supernatural, and they reject the dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural orders as an abstraction devoid of any analytical and practical use.

Another closely related assumption accepted by these writers is Teilhard de Chardin's and Bonhoeffer's contention that the secular life of mankind holds an intrinsic interest for Christian faith. Some of them even subscribe to Arend Van Leeuwen's view that secularization is actually sweeping away the superstitions of the various religions and preparing men to accept Christ, by forcing them to ask those questions about salvation and meaning for which Christianity has answers.

More, directly, however, it is these writers' concept of salvation that to a large extent shapes their interpretation of mission. For them the debate whether there is salvation outside the church is a scholastic luxury, since it has overlooked the basic biblical fact that salvation refers primarily to this world and to the integral human being, body and soul, individual and society, person and cosmos. Christ is not satisfied with "guaranteeing heaven" (ibid: 255) to human beings who prepare themselves for eternity by suffering and toiling in the anguished span of time allotted them. Neither should the church indulge in escapes from the reality of salvation even though a meritoriously irenic concept such as "anonymous Christian". For these authors, salvation is a concrete communion of men with God and of men among themselves. It is a gift and a task that embraces the whole human world, transforms it, and brings it to its fullness (Ep 4:13; Gutierrez 1973: 198; Dussel 1970: 144).

This integral salvation is the goal of the church's mission and of the missions. Anything short of proclaiming and bringing into effect Christ's salvation to today's suffering human beings does not do justice to the concept of mission. This goal is twofold. Negatively, the Church should strive to liberate men from all that exploits them and enslaves them, making them less than human (Lk 7:22-23). Positively, the church should strive to create a new man, a new society (Jn 1; Ga 16:15; 2 Co 5:17). Jesus Christ is what God means by man (Gutierrez 1973: 146). He is the measure of the nature manhood to which every individual is called to grow. The achievement of his fullest potential should be the limit. The Church

as true eucharistic and ecclesial community is what God means by society. As it happens in the Eucharistic, brotherhood and community - koinonia - should be both proclaimed and brought into effect wherever the Church claims to be present (ibid: 255-279; Beaver 1973: 139ff).

While these goals for missionary activity appear to be rather well established among these authors, less agreement is to be found concerning the strategies that should be adopted to achieve them. They are listed here in what appears to be a logical order:

1. Continual conversion to the neighbor. Since each man is the living temple of God, we meet God in our encounter with men. Love of God is love of man (not to be equivocated as love of man because of love of God) (Gutierrez 1973: 194). There can be no conversion to God or true reform of self without a permanent process of conversion and identification with the suffering neighbor in whom God dwells, and without gratuitous sharing of community and joy with them (ibid: 205).

2. Conscientization (Freire 1970). By adopting this unalienating and liberating cultural action we can make the oppressed and the exploited aware of their human dignity and potentials and motivate them to become active participants in their liberation process.

3. Church as an institution of social criticism and of social prophethood (Metz 1969: 16; and Ryan in Dulles 1972: 45). We can sensitize the Church to all the issues of social justice and human dignity. We may also succeed in mobilizing her to take sides in favor of the poor and the oppressed and to call for appropriate liberating policies (Gutierrez 1973: 236; Latin American Bishops Conference 1970).

All the listed strategies are to be considered forms of indirect evangelization, rather than simply acts of pre-evangelization (Rayan 1976; Anderson 1975: 87-105). They are deeds that make the words of direct evangelization credible when and where they are pronounced. They are means bringing the Church into existence as an effective instrument of salvation and as Christ's continuing presence in this world.

The thinkers responsible for this interpretation of mission claim Jacques Maritain and the worker-priests of France as their own forerunners. They see in Rerum Novarum, Quadragesimo Anno and Mater et Magistra the sources of their basic themes, and they point to Gaudium et Spes, Populorum Progressio and sections of the Declaration of the 1974 Synod of Bishops (Anderson 1975: 259-267) as authoritative versions of their approach.

The Uppsala Report (WCC 1968) and the Nairobi Assembly document the existence of the same interpretation of mission in official statements of the World Council of Churches.

Mission as Mutual Assistance of Local Churches.

The proponents of this interpretation of mission have lived and labored in traditional mission countries. They have witnessed the vitality of mission churches, and they know their aspirations and sensitivities. Furthermore, they are capable of standing back and looking with critical eye at their mother

churches. They can detect forms of paternalism in the policies of their mother churches, as well as urgent pastoral needs that could be met by evangelists from young mission churches.

In this context, the suggestions offered by Bishop Joseph J. Blomjous, W.F., Charles Curry, M.M., and John Coonan are highly inspiring (quoted in Dulles 1972; Coonan 1975: 285 ff). They like to articulate their awareness of the contemporary situation of missionary life by referring to Acts 16:9: "Come over to Macedonia and help us," as well as to the totality of the early church life documented by that book.

Although the biblical basis for this interpretation of mission may appear insufficient to some, it is undeniably true that the church in mission territories has already been planted. In some sense, there are no longer mission churches. There are only churches faced with varied and ever-changing pastoral needs in different geographical situations. This fact, together with the post-Vatican II heightened awareness of the predominant role of local church leadership in setting up pastoral policies, is the major premise for this view.

Accordingly, the goal of mission is clearly identified as mutual assistance of local churches, Missionary activity becomes a function of the Church's catholicity. The help provided by older and younger churches to each other expresses their deep unity and the universality of their pastoral concern. The strategies suggested for the achievement of this goal of missionary activity are already implemented in a number of churches:

1. Personnel exchange between younger and older churches according to the skills needed to meet specific pastoral needs.
2. The initiative for personnel re-allocation should therefore belong to the receiving church, rather than continue to reside with any of the mother churches or with Rome, or with mission boards, since there is a limit to the amount of personnel and capital a local church can realistically absorb.
3. From this perspective, there is room for temporary limited assignments and exchange of personnel.
4. Lay people can play a major role in providing the needed skills for the required time.
5. International ecumenical teams of specialists can be formed and deployed according to demand.

This interpretation of mission has found official expression in the third chapter and sections of the sixth chapter (e.g., no.38) of Ad Gentes (Abbott 1966). Furthermore, this interpretation of mission was the driving force behind the merger of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches at New Delhi in 1961, and of the enslavement of the evangelistic missionary enterprise to the stifling syndrome of church growth present in subsequent conventions (Underwood 1974: 23-30).

Mission as Church

A number of theologians and church leaders, painfully aware of the reality of the de-christianization, have undertaken a thoroughgoing rethinking of the concept of mission. The socio-cultural matrix from which this interpretation arises is post World War II France. However, the message proposed by

Godin, Chenu, Retif, Chavasse, Suhard, Suenens and others has found extensive acceptance in countries similarly imbued in Christian tradition, and similarly affected by the process of de-christianization.

The Gospel of Saint John (especially chapters 1 and 20) and Ephesians 1:4-6 are the preferred scriptural references to which these thinkers return for inspiration. From the perspective they have thus gained, they then proceed to recast the whole theology of missions. Accordingly, the missions and the idea of mission itself are seen as a manifestation of the reality of the Holy Trinity. Mission is first of all the dynamism of God's inner life. It expresses itself in the community of the Trinity, and thanks to Christ's activity, in the ever-growing ecclesial community.

Ecclesiology is then radically re-thought from the perspective of this Trinitarian concept of mission. Mission is the supreme regulative and dynamic principle of all ecclesial activity (Congar 1937). It is a permanent reality, co-extensive with the life of the Church, which is missionary by essence since: "The Church is Jesus Christ always renewing himself, reappearing in human form; she is the permanent incarnation of the Son of God" (Moehler 1843: 6-7). Rooted in the reality of the Trinity from which it draws its life, the Church has a sign-giving nature at every phase of its development; it announces the community of God's Persons and invites people to become part of that community (Tshibango 1972). It is missionary during every phase of its life, and can be described as the expansion of the Trinitarian mission in time and space (Journet 1951; A. Retif 1966 and L. Retif 1966). So essential is the concept of mission for an understanding of the Church that it can be said that mission is the Church.

Besides re-formulating ecclesiology, these thinkers also insist on concepts of human development and growth of humanity that are consistent with patristic thought and contradictory of the prevailing optimistic views associated with Teilhard de Chardin and Bonhoeffer. According to Congar, for instance (1937), as history evolves, men become more and more heterogeneous. The growth of mankind is complicated by division, separation and dispersion.

These biblical, ecclesiological and philosophical premises are clearly operative in the way these authors define the goals of missionary activity. Mission is Church, and the Church exists to go out to men, to the world, and to gather them up into community with God and with one another by evangelizing them. Two mutually complementary goals can be identified: 1. Incarnation, i.e. the process by which the Church becomes fully present to the men of today. The context of this effort is human space defined by human needs rather than by geographical boundaries. The continuity of societies and culture through time is seen as problematic, since every new generation is a new world that has never been Christianized. 2. Assumption, i.e. the process by which the Church gathers up men and incorporates them into a community of believers through evangelization.

The strategies suggested to achieve the goals of missionary work vary according to the specific human situation in which the Church had to be made fully present. There are, however, some guidelines that appear to be generally valid:

1. Cooperation. It enjoins dialogue with the non-Christian and a-Christian world, as well as the adoption of its legitimate aspirations, hopes and goals. A necessary condition for successful cooperation is the freedom of the Christian spokesman (men) to be true to human encounter and dialogue with non-believers.

2. Accommodation and assimilation. The Church modifies her behaviour patterns wherever possible.

3. Reform. The Church is aware of the intrinsic tension that exists between what she is in Christ and what she is in the world, and of the persistent need to rediscover her identity and her mission by reflecting and contemplating on the person and mission of Christ. Contemplative communities are an indispensable factor of missionary effectiveness because they constitute a dramatic reminder of this never-ceasing need.

4. Mobilization of the whole Church. The whole Church is in mission. Every member of the Christian community is called upon to continue Christ's work in today's world. The primitive Church described in the books of Acts is seen as the model for contemporary Christians.

5. Openness to the Holy Spirit. Charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit who continues to lead the church. They are not restricted to the authority of the hierarchy. There should be room for acceptance of all these gifts as well as for the formation of *communautés de base*.

Vatican II itself as an event could be considered a convincing example of the validity of this interpretation of mission. The theoretical formulation of this approach, however, was pointedly rejected by Ad Gentes, although its theology of the Trinity and its contention that the whole Church is missionary by nature were incorporated by that document - and by the first chapter of Lumen Gentium. Later documents of the Church - such as the Declaration of the 1974 Synod of Bishops and Evangelii Nuntiandi - continue to emphasize the missionary nature of the Church and the missionary duty of every Christian, but it is obvious that this interpretation as a whole does not enjoy official approval. The *communautés de base* are explicitly criticized in Evangelii Nuntiandi (Pope Paul 1976, no. 58).

Mission as Fulfillment

A small group of brilliant historians of religion (e.g. Raymond Panikkar, Britto J. Chetimattan), systematic theologians (e.g. Paul Tillich, K. Rahner, H.R. Schlette), and social critics and philosophers (e.g. Ivan Illich, R.C. Zaehner) are responsible for giving renewed plausibility to an interpretation of mission originally proposed by Justin Martyr and, later on, by Abelard and Nicholas of Cusa. Some of these intellectuals grew up as members of small Catholic communities (e.g. Panikkar and Chetimattan) surrounded by well established and philosophically sophisticated religious systems. Others are leading figures of the ecumenical movement (e.g. Gregory Baum).

The parables that liken Christ's disciples to salt and light (Mt 5: 13-14), and the Gospel to leaven (Mt 13:33) and to wheat among the weeds (Mt 13:1-30), are consistently used as the relevant matrix for any discussion of the Church's missionary activity. They argue that Christ did not come to found a religion, much less a new religion, but rather to fulfill all justice and to bring to its fullness every religion of the world (Mt 3:15).

Freedom of conscience, revelation understood as the opening up of human consciousness in contact with the divine, universality of salvation even outside the visible communion with the Church, these are three themes strongly emphasized in the world-view shared by these thinkers. According to their perspective, the goal of missionary activity therefore cannot simply be the extension of the Church as it already exists in America and Europe (Illich 1970: 195). Rahner, it is to be seen as the fulfillment of every true and authentic religion through conversion: The process of conversion implies a death and resurrection, but, just as the risen Christ or the baptised person is the same as previously and yet is a new being, likewise converted Hinduism is the true risen Hinduism, the same and yet renewed, transformed (Panikkar 1964: 168).

Conversion in the sense of a confessional transition to the Catholic religious community is, of course, a possible option. However, it should be encouraged only in exceptional cases when the individual ceases to be able to find God and worship him in the religion of his ancestors.

Open dialogue can sum up the strategy recommended by this group of thinkers. Missionaries should be convinced that they must learn before claiming any right to speak. They should find out what there is in the religious heritage of other people that authentically expresses their experience of God. Above all, they must convince themselves that this is something that they should on no account destroy or replace. The role of the missionary is one of midwife and catalyst, seeking to assist in the birth of something he cannot himself produce: a new community of God (Illich 1970: 105). He cannot prescribe in advance the ritual and the institutions of this new church; he must allow himself to be told what these should look like by his hearers. They are the Church, they already have God in their midst.

A moratorium of traditional missionary activity is understandable, and perhaps long overdue, according to this approach to mission.

Elements of this interpretation of mission have been officially adopted and proposed by the Decree of Ecumenism, and by the Declarations on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions and On Religious Freedom.

Conclusions

The five meanings of mission discussed in this paper are well documented in recent Catholic missiological literature. Attempts have been made to press this rich variety into one or another of the five interpretations. While official documents have tried to harmonize the divergent views under the synthesizing theme of evangelization, individual theologians have

delivered scathing critiques of opposing approaches (Damboriena 1971; Hillman 1966).

One obvious objective of those efforts was practical in nature. They attempted to eliminate the confusion of contrasting interpretations besetting the field of missiology and to give a unitary direction to mission workers. Mobilization of personnel and of huge resources needed for traditional missionary work obviously cannot be achieved when frustration and uncertainty reign.

However, it is likely that these various interpretations of mission will not be easily exorcised away. Without the previous disappearance of the matrices from which they stem, these interpretations are likely to persist.

Reference: PETIT ECHO, N. 700, 1979/5.

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:MUSLIMS ON PUEBLA:
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The manifesto emerging from the third General Latin American Bishops' Conference held in Puebla, Mexico last month must be seen as giving green light to the so-called 'progressives' of the Roman Catholic Church. While insisting on Church's transcendental mission and the need to uphold traditional dogma as well as warning bishops and priests to stay clear from party politics the document nonetheless minces no words in condemning the present state of affairs in Latin America and placing the Hierarchy squarely on the side of the poor and oppressed. The strong stand adopted at the conference has come as a surprise to many because the so-called 'theology of liberation' was recently under attack on the part of many prelates who would like the Church to be neutral in politics and social movements. But it represents a continuation of the trend very clearly set already by the former, the second Latin American bishops' Conference, held at Medellin in 1968. The strong reaffirmation of the progressive stand undoubtedly owes much to the personality of the new, Polish Pope. Although he has consistently dissociated himself from attempts to secularise Christian doctrine or even adopt a kind of Marxist ideology he, in his opening address to the Bishops at Puebla, committed his Church to active struggle for social justice. His attitude was best reflected in a subsequent statement by Mgr. Perez Morales, of the Latin American Bishops' commission for relations with non-believers. He told the press that the policy of the local Church was to carry on a dialogue with communists, with whom, he said, it at least had in common the concepts of social equality and a fair distribution of wealth. He pointed to 'positive' elements in Marxist social analysis and pledged his Church to study and adopt such elements, 'without ignoring the limitations of the communist vision of man's liberation'.

From an article: 'Doing a Khomeini in Latin America, Impact International, 9-22, March 1969, Vol. 9:5. Reference: INFO ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Volume 6, No. 3, April 1979.

INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY

(Organized by the University of Santo Tomas and the Association of Catholic Universities of the Philippines, in partnership with the Institute of Missiology, Germany. Held in Manila, 20-23 June, 1978).

Similar meetings have been held in recent years for theologians of other regions with broad socio-cultural similarities, for example, Latin American and African. Other meetings, such as the Ecumenical Dialogue of Third World Theologians held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, August 1976, have sought to bring together an even wider representative group in order to highlight common issues and problems. The purpose of the Manila Colloquium was to provide a similar opportunity in the Asian region, "to bring together scholars in theology and department heads of theology in various universities for a conference on theological institutions and cultural diversity". The more specific aim was to undertake a "situational analysis" of the problem of contextual theology "as it is experienced in the Asian countries". Among the thirty-five participants, the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, India and Indonesia were represented. Sr. Wendy Flannery of the Melanesian Institute was also invited to attend.

Discussion of issues was focused by means of a series of "country papers" from the Philippines, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. These contributions were largely from a Roman Catholic viewpoint, except for a short presentation by Dr. E. Nacpil, secretary of the South-east Asian Association of Theological Schools, and the paper from Papua New Guinea which attempted to draw on the broader situation of the christian churches. A framework for the preparation of the papers was provided in the form of a questionnaire as follows:

1. Current Situation

- 1.1 What are the principal characteristics of the socio-cultural or political milieu in your country?
- 1.2 What challenges and questions do they pose to your theological institutions, e.g. Catechetical Institutes, Pastoral Programmes, Seminary Formation, Universities?

2. Present Response

How and how far are teaching and research in theology being carried on in response to numbers 1 and 2 above?

3. Further Developments

What new theological and pastoral problems and questions are coming to the fore, and what priorities do you propose in order to meet these?

The possible contribution from Papua New Guinea to this Asian Colloquium was envisaged from a two-fold standpoint: (I) On the one hand, the voices of christian theologians from Melanesia can be added to those in other non-western contexts who seek to articulate and bring to formulation responses to

the Gospel of Jesus Christ from within their particular cultural context, taking into account both the life-giving and death-dealing dimensions of that context. So that one can hope for a sharing both of the dynamism of "incarnation" and of the new ways of understanding and responding to the saving word of the gospel that are thereby opened up. (II) On the other hand, Papua New Guinean voices have begun to be added to the prophetic chorus of those who, in Asia and elsewhere, see (and struggle to account for) their christian identity and commitment as authentic only insofar as it involves a stand with regard to their social, economic and political context, with its possibilities for either promoting or stifling human life and dignity.

Initial discussion of more theoretical questions pertaining to the general topic was stimulated by the opening paper of Filipino theologian C.G. Arevalo S.J. : "Pre-Notes, by way of an elementary introduction to the Contextualization of Theology". An important "motivational" point was emphasised in one of his opening statements. "To address ourselves to 'Gospel and theology in context', he noted, "is (from one standpoint) to join a growing ecclesial movement which looks to a 'more authentic evangelization' both within and outside the Christian community. The contextualization of theology is thus to be seen as a task at the service of a more authentic Christian and evangelical life, and at the service of a more authentic and 'more effective' evangelization.... We are not involved here primarily in the study and discussion of an academic activity, of an academic undertaking, but at an effort to make evangelization and Christian life and praxis more authentic, more interiorized - more true to the Gospel, more true to its task in history and beyond history, as well as more truly ours".

In several papers and discussions it was emphasised that the christian theological task is not just an exercise for academics or the monopoly of a theologian "class". Rather, the role of the theologian is to creatively reflect back what is already living among people. Theology should be seen as growing out of and in service to the faith community, highlighting and if necessary challenging the community's faith experience and expression, so that its christian life and praxis might grow and mature. This would demand from the theologian a sensitivity to the "sub-theological" modes of religious expression existing in the community, such as popular celebrations, creative literature, church decoration, dance and song, and traditional religious understanding, as well as to the broader cultural context as a distinctive human "language" for expressing a gospel response.

At the same time, it was noted that theologians are being called upon to articulate a response to new questions and challenges facing the life and praxis of christian communities in Asia in a changing context shaped by the processes of "modernization". For this task, they would need to be able to draw on the hermeneutical resources made available by sociology and other human sciences. These two distinct yet interrelated theological tasks were designated as "indigenisation" and "contextualisation". Examples of attempts at both were presented in the "country" papers.

The affirmation of such an approach to "doing theology" inevitably led to an awareness of the need to take a radical look at what is currently happening in many Asian (and other Third World) theological institutions. As one Indian participant put it, a shift needs to be made in models of theological education from domination to liberation, from impersonality to humanisation, from indoctrination to conscientisation. An Indonesian participant proposed a programme for restructuring seminary theological education along inductive, experience-based, team-teaching lines.

As the Colloquium drew to a close with a common statement of vision and directions, the ground was prepared for future similar gatherings of theologians in the region, with prior preparation on specific theological topics of common interest and concern. It was envisaged that such meetings would have an inter-disciplinary character. It is my hope that they will aim also at a broader ecumenical representation. The papers and proceedings of the Colloquium are to be published, and copies can be obtained from: Fr. P. Gonzalez, Dean, University of Santo Tomas, Manila - 2806, Philippines.

Reference: CATALYST SOCIAL PASTORAL MAGAZINE FOR MELANESIA, Vol. 8, No. 4, 4th Quarter 1978.

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Society for study of religion set up:

'China's first national meeting on research in religion was held recently in Kunming, Yunnan Province. Over one hundred scholars, professors, teachers and leading cadres attended. A number of scholars read papers on Buddhism, Lamaism, Taoism, Islam and Christianity. Opinions and suggestions were put forward on questions relating to religious studies. Important research papers and reports delivered at the meeting included 'Some questions on research in religion', 'The origin of Mahayana', 'Grades and privileges of Buddhism in China', 'Some recent questions on religion in foreign countries', 'The beginnings of Christianity', 'Jesus in history', 'The historical background of the emergence of Islam', and 'Develop our own Marxist-Leninist studies of religion'. These academic reports put forth some original views. The meeting was lively. An atmosphere of letting a hundred schools of thought contend prevailed. Mei Yi, Director of the Planning Bureau of the Academy of Social Sciences; Ren Jiyu, Director of the Institute of Research on World Religion, and other well-known experts spoke at the meeting. The 1979-1985 plan for research in religion was discussed and adopted and the Chinese Society for Study of Religion was set up. Zhao Puchu was elected honorary president and Ren Jiyu president of the society.'

(NCNA in English 27.2.79 FE 6055 1.3.79). Reference: CHINA STUDY PROJECT, Bulletin No. 9, April 1979.

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SWAHILI HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY UNESCO as an international language, and its official paper, UNESCO Journal, already published in 19 different languages, has not come out for the first time in a sub-Saharan African language.

Reference: MISSION INTERCOM, No. 84, April 1979.

UNCTAD V AND THE PEOPLE

A CHRISTIAN STATEMENT

(The following paper was written by Christians in Manila on the occasion of the UNCTAD V meeting there.)

Our point of view--if not our wisdom--is the same as that of Jesus, Who spent so much of His time with and for the poor seeking to bring them to a more abundant life. Do the policies advocated by UNCTAD benefit the ordinary man, the ordinary Filipino? We speak primarily of the Philippines, but we believe that what we say is also substantially true of other developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Tondo slum dwellers have said, "To be for development means to fight poverty, and to fight poverty, you must be with the poor." This is our conviction.

EXTENT OF POVERTY

In the Philippines, an estimated 80% of our people - about 34 million people - live below the poverty line as determined by the Development Academy of the Philippines. This is a problem of grave concern to us in the Church.

For instance:

1. Our workers can buy less and less with their wages. Government statistics show that, despite a real growth in the country's per capita income, real wages for skilled and unskilled labor in 1978 were only 76% and 63% respectively, of what they had been in 1972.

2. Income has become increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. In 1971, the five percent of the population who received the highest incomes received 24% of total national income while the poorest forty percent got only 12%. In 1975, the top five percent received more, 32%, while the lowest forty percent, a meager 11% of total national income.

3. Despite over-all adequate food production, about 70% of our population are malnourished; 50% are deficient in protein and anemic. Malnutrition causes 40% of deaths among children.

WHY THE POOR ARE BECOMING POORER

Much, much more can be said about the extent of deprivation in the country and of its terrible effects on human development. But that is not the real issue. The real issue is "Why are the poor becoming poorer?"

We see the cause of worsening poverty in oppressive social structures both within developing societies and without; social structures built on domination: domination of the poor nations by the rich nations of the world, and domination of the poor within nations by the rich and the powerful; social structures motivated by an unmitigated urge for profit, justified by appeals to fictitious free enterprise within the nation, and free trade without.

People are poor not because they want to be, nor because they are lazy or ignorant or unlucky. People are poor because they are "deprived of access to material goods and resources which they need to create a truly human life for themselves. Deprived, because they live under oppression, that is, under social, economic and political structures which have injustice built into them." (Asian Bishops' Taipei Statement, 1974). To eliminate poverty, then, social structures - national and international - must be changed and transformed.

UNCTAD V and POVERTY

So the standard by which we prefer to judge UNCTAD V is: To what extent will UNCTAD V change international structures that support and strengthen national structures which breed poverty and oppression?

As long as UNCTAD V emphasizes international trade, which entails encouraging foreign investment - and today this means investment by transnational corporations - and aid in the form of foreign debt, we believe that UNCTAD V can accomplish little.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND NATIONAL POVERTY

Take the Philippine case as an example. For several years the Philippine development program has depended on exports, foreign investment by transnational corporations, and foreign debt for its success. Yet the vast majority of our people are poorer today than at any time before.

The rationale for an export promotion program which UNCTAD encourages is that it hastens growth, and consequently, development. Our experience in the Philippines has been that income distribution has worsened at a time when the main thrust of the government was, and still is, the intensification and diversification of export products.

For growth concentrates on increased production, and ignores the questions of what is to be produced, for whom it is to be produced, and how it is to be distributed. Since the Philippines is a market economy needs are satisfied only if they can be translated into demands through purchasing power - people can meet their needs only if they have money to pay. The poor have no money. They have needs but no wherewithal to meet them. Their basic needs are pushed aside by the wants of the rich who have the purchasing power and the requirements of foreign markets. That is why we export food while our people starve.

Besides, an export promotion program such as we see in the Philippines requires that wages be kept low. General wage increases are decreed, but deferred or denied workers in export industries. Workers in export-oriented industries are not allowed to strike. They cannot even freely organize.

So the program export-led industrialization cannot satisfy people's needs.

INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL AND NATIONAL POVERTY

Neither can foreign investments and heavy foreign borrowing succeed.

To attract foreign capital to invest in the Philippines, and transnationals to operate here, there must be assurance of a stable and profitable income. This requires the general wage

level to be kept as low as possible, and the prices of the products of these foreign firms to be as high as demand will allow. The effects of such a policy on our people's level of living have been and are disastrous.

In addition, foreign investments drain capital from the economy by repatriating more in profits than is invested. They bring in foreign technology which is labor-saving, and barely affects employment; and which requires foreign inputs and further depletes our foreign exchange.

Consequently, we become even more dependent on foreign loans and susceptible to pressures from international financial agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Self-reliant, self-generated and self-directed growth is prevented - and only that kind of growth can be called authentic human development.

Like a tenant bound to his landlord, the Philippines has become tied to foreign creditors, incurring new debts to pay off existing ones, each new debt imposing more restrictive conditions on how to run the national economy. The burden of these debts falls on the people living now and on future generations, for the government will not be able to pay these debts except by raising taxes.

Our people have little hope of enjoying a just and free - a human - way of life if the implementation of these so-called development policies persists. They deepen the divisions existing among our people, a people already divided into rich and poor, into a local elite working hand in glove with foreign interests and an exploited mass, into oppressors and oppressed. They provoke repressive measures that do violence to human rights and human dignity.

WORLD STRUCTURES AND NATIONAL STRUCTURES

The Philippine experience has also been the experience of other nations. World trade structures parallel domestic structures, and in fact, have created them. It is no coincidence that the rich nations of the world, with only 23% of the world population, account for about 70% of world consumption, just as the richest 20% of Philippine families account for 55.5% of our income. And it is not by chance that the "Second Development Decade" has witnessed more and more dictatorships imposed upon the poorer nations of the world.

The world truly needs a new international economic order. But we do not believe that such an order can be achieved by what are today called "global interdependence," "socially committed capitalism", and "international solidarity". These are euphemisms, new names for the old aches and pains.

It is not international interdependence that the world needs, but international social justice. For years now, the world has been interdependent: rich nations have depended on poor nations for their raw materials, as poor nations have depended on rich nations for their markets - yet for years now, rich nations have dominated and continue to dominate poor nations. Interdependence among unequals is simply another way to deny economic independence to the weak.

NATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE

For global interdependence and solidarity to stop being slogans and become realities, the first step must be to eliminate poverty: poverty among nations and within nations. And the former would be simpler to attain if the latter were first achieved.

We believe poverty can more easily be eliminated if, instead of relying on international trade and international capital for development, the poorer nations relied on themselves, on using their own resources, by creating their own technologies, to meet the needs of the many rather than the demands of the few.

Only after the economies of poor nations have built themselves into self-directed, self-generated and self-reliant economies can a truly new international economic order be created, an international order that does not merely render lip service to, but respects by deed, the timeless principles of international relations: sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-intervention, non-aggression, mutual and equitable benefit, promotion of international social justice, and international cooperation.

SELF-RELIANCE AND DEMOCRACY

We believe that self-reliance can be reached in many ways, and that each nation's history, culture, values and resources will determine the path it should take.

But we also believe that, whatever path be taken, there is an indispensable condition for becoming self-reliant: there must be political and economic democracy.

The poor, the voiceless, the forgotten--laborers, peasants, farmers, fishermen, ethnic minorities, slum dwellers, students --the vast army of today's disadvantaged and dispossessed must not only be told they have--they must actually have--a stake in the nation: a fair share in the nation's product, a real part in making decisions that determine the national future, and effective control over their implementation. Only when the creative power of the poor is thus aroused and the hidden strength of the weak released will a nation gather the force to stand up to the pressures, the impositions and the exactions of rich nations. Only then will it be self-reliant because only then will it rely on the people, and the people are the nation.

PEOPLE TRULY UNITED

In stressing that nations must become self-reliant before a truly new international order can be created, we do not wish to diminish the efforts exerted in UNCTAD V, much less to deprecate the idea that gave it birth. We suggest only that more could be accomplished to bring about justice in this world if, in coming together, governments seek direct ways of ending poverty not only among nations but also within nations. Then perhaps the world may truly say that it is composed of united nations, peoples sharing peace and joy, not hunger and pain.

THE CHURCHES

To help bring about this vision of the world has ever been the mission of the Churches. If at times, we have allowed our

vision to become clouded and our commitment to waver, today we are clear that we can accomplish our mission dynamically and fruitfully only by having what Latin American Bishops have termed the "preferential option for the poor." More than our hearts must be for the poor: We must cast our lot with them; we must be one with them and become of them. Then we can help bring people together to work for the building up of self-reliant peoples--which others have called Basic Christian Communities--where a fully human life can be enjoyed by all.

We pray that God will bless all attending the UNCTAD meeting and all men everywhere who work for justice. We pray, too, that He give us the wisdom, compassion and courage that we need to carry out with the poor the building up of a truly just and human world.

Signed by Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen, ocd
Secretary-General

FOR: The National Council of Churches in the Philippines;
The Association of Major Religious Superiors of Men and Women in the Philippines;
The National Secretariat for Social Action, Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines; and
The Office for Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences,

THROUGH: The Ecumenical Secretariat for UNCTAD V.

Reference: INFO ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Vol.6, No.5, May 1979.

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PHILIPPINES
UNCTAD V

The Pope has addressed a special message to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD V) which is at present taking place in Manila, and at which the Holy See is represented by a delegation headed by Fr. Roger Heckel S.J, secretary of the Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission. In his message, which was read out at the inaugural session of the conference by the Holy See's permanent observer at the United Nations, Archbishop Giovanni Cheli, the Pope said that the principal themes for debate - improvement of the conditions of human life, meeting the expectations of people who struggle in dangerous and often oppressive conditions, helping man to regain control of his material and social universe - reflect the concerns of the Holy See and of the Church as a whole. Through greater awareness of his own dignity and of the creative potential of his intelligence, as well as of the powerful moral dynamism which impels him to seek justice, peace and cooperation, man, the Pope said, will find the courage to make the concrete decisions that must be made, but in practical terms the fundamental problems which the conference will have to examine are those of the just price and the just contract. "One aspect of this, he went on, "is obviously the remuneration of work effectively carried out by each individual, but it is not the only one. It is even more important to take account of the right of every people to use those goods which have been more directly

entrusted to them to administer, the reasonable and far-sighted use of which conditions their own free development. What is more, since work is a prerogative of man, its remuneration must make it possible for him to live as befits a human being... And because individuals and peoples live in solidarity with one another, remuneration should reflect this solidarity...which must be expressed concretely through a just division of the material and cultural goods which have been produced throughout the various stages of human history and always have a universal purpose." These considerations should be taken into account, the Pope said, when efforts are being made to establish a just price, which should never be determined solely by factors connected with the market or by the interests of particular groups. He went on to say that healthy competition should be conditioned by "a fuller and more immediate redistribution of riches and of control over them," and that it is in this perspective that the problems of the burden carried by the poorer countries, the problem of the common fund and the problem of providing adequate institutional structures, based on international solidarity, should be discussed.

Reference: THE TABLET, 19 May 1979.

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Available in the Documentation Centre:

Robert McNamara's address to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Manila, 10th May 1979. (Documentation No. 4/3503.)

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NIGERIA

NEW MISSION SOCIETY IS BORN

Iperu-Remo, 14th May 1979 - (DIA)- The Roman Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, in charge of the Church's missionary work, has approved the establishment of the Nigerian "Missionary Society of St. Paul". Archbishop Lourdasamy, Secretary of the Congregation, in a letter to the Secretary of the Nigerian Episcopal Conference approved the unanimous decision of the Nigerian bishops to erect the Missionary Society of St. Paul into a "Pious Association" and to appoint Bishop Anthony Sanusi of Ijebu-Ode, as ordinary of the new society and of the National Missionary Seminary of St. Paul.

Priests already ordained may join the new society, as well as students of the National Missionary Seminary at a certain stage of their course. As yet there are no members of the society. The seminary is in its second year and has 24 students. A third group of students will be admitted next October. This seminary will be formally opened and launched in special ceremonies at the end of this month of May. A/E 5/510

Reference: DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION FOR AND ABOUT AFRICA, 14 May, 1979, 15th Year, No. 207.

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NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:

-EVALUATION OF THE 22ND MAY SEMINAR AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY. Only 11 evaluations were returned. Concerning the presentation 10 made very positive comments on the presentation; three mentioned the slide show as valuable. One thought that two resource people would have been better; one would have like the CWME paper summarized. The Sharing Session was regarded as very valuable and several suggested it be repeated. Concerning the schedule, one suggestion was for a shorter noon break and sending a schedule out beforehand. On the whole the schedule was regarded as convenient. Under other comments one person remarked on the value of the contact with Multi Media and another was impressed with Sedos' collaboration with the Secretariat for Christian Unity. Three persons made suggestions on the elections and these will be noted in future elections.

The Seminar report will be published in the 15th July issue of the Bulletin. This is the last bulletin for the summer.

-MEETINGS: From the 23rd to 27th May, I attended the CWME meeting of 85 Protestant mission agencies in Glion, Switzerland. From the 28th to 31st, a meeting on "Common Witness" was held in Venice. From 14th to 16th June, a live-in meeting sponsored by the Secretariat of Christian Unity was held here in Rome. The purpose of the meeting was to work on the position paper to be presented by the Catholic Church for the Melbourne Conference. The reflections provided at the Sedos Seminar, the Commission Six meetings and the Knock meetings were very valuable.

-THE MISSION SEMINAR: The first meeting of the steering committee will take place on the 2nd July. Work has been done on the topics sent in and seven tentative hypotheses drawn up as a beginning. Notices of how members may send in their contributions have been sent out. It has been suggested that either half or all of the contribution be sent now...whichever is more convenient.

-CORSO DI FORMAZIONE: Fr. Commissari, pime, has sent a notice of a course for priests, brothers and sisters who are home from the missions. The title is "L'Annuncio del Vangelo all'uomo d'oggi". The course begins on Monday, 3rd September and ends on Saturday, 29th September. Those interested are asked to contact P. Filippo Commissari, pime, Via Guerrazzi 11, 00152 ROMA - Tel. 58.97.941.

-FILMS ON BRAZIL: The Radharc film "New Day in Brazil" and two films; one on Indians in Brazil and one on Zululand from the Consolata Fathers Centre were shown to Sedos Members on the 12th June at Sacred Heart School. We are grateful to Fr. Tohill and the Salesian Fathers for the excellent hospitality. The Radharc film was also shown to 50 participants in the Nemi programme. The film is still in my possession should a Sedos generalate wish to show it.

-BEGECA - This emerged as a department of Misereor and became an independent business in 1968. It was established in order to support the Church's welfare and pastoral activities and to help project planners by solving their commercial problems. A few possibilities of the type of material they can obtain inexpensively for people working in developing countries are: office machines, bicycles, and landrovers, etc. BEGECA's address is: Begeca GmbH, Franzstrasse 109, Postfach 287 5100 Aachen.