

REPORT ON
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MISSION
MANILA, PHILIPPINES DECEMBER 2-7 1979

(We are grateful to Fr. Mel Brady, ofm, for the following summary and evaluation on the Manila Congress.)

1. Sponsors: The Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and The Pontifical Mission Aid Societies of the Philippines.
2. Participants:
 - 2.1) In general: Official Delegates were Presidents and Secretaries General of National Conferences of Bishops; Chairmen of National Episcopal Commissions on Missions; National Directors of Pontifical Mission Aid Societies; National Directors of Pontifical Associations of the Holy Childhood; Superiors General (men and women), or their representatives, of selected mission-sending Institutes. Observers were Bishops of the Philippines who were not official Delegates; selected religious men and women from the Philippines; and certain others from different mission-oriented organizations in various parts of the world. Other participants were speakers, resource persons, workshop coordinators and panelists.
 - 2.2) In particular: There were participants from almost all Asian countries (including Burma, but excluding Vietnam), and these were in the majority. There were many participants from Africa; fewer from Europe, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and U.S.A.
 - 2.3) The Special Envoy of the Holy Father was Agnelo Cardinal Rossi.
3. Program:
 - 3.1) The Congress was carried on through general assemblies and through Workshops. There was a very well prepared Eucharistic celebration each day, as well as equally well prepared morning prayers and midday prayers, carried on either in general sessions or in the Workshops.
 - 3.2) Each evening there was a conference for the general public to which the Congress participants were not invited.
 - 3.3) The nine Workshops were as follows:
 - 3.31) Theology for Mission, especially in the Asian Context Today
 - 3.32) Local Asian Churches and the Task of Mission
 - 3.33) Dialogue with other Religious Traditions of Asia
 - 3.34) The Gospel, the Kingdom of God, Development and Liberation
 - 3.35) Basic Christian Communities and Local Ministries in Asia

3.36) Prayer, Spirituality and Formation for Mission

3.37) Co-Responsible Evangelization

3.38) Mission and Education

3.39) Media and Evangelization.

3.4) Each Workshop was supplied with background readings, including one done especially as a "working paper" for that Workshop. Each Workshop produced its own "consensus paper."

3.5) The Congress ended with a Mass whose main celebrant was Jaime Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila. After the Mass there was a mission-sending ceremony for seventy Filipino men and women at which Agnelo Cardinal Rossi presided.

4. Objectives of the Congress:

4.1) To bring together, for the first time, all the above-mentioned participants so that they might get to know each other better, grow in a spirit of mutual collaboration in mission, learn from each other's experiences and labors, share their knowledge, their concerns and plans, etc., for the advancement of the tasks of evangelization in the world of today, especially in Asia.

4.2) To enter upon theological reflection on the meaning, and the concrete tasks, of mission and evangelization in today's world,--in the light of God's Word and of the Christian Tradition, in continuity with the teaching of the Church's magisterium and of the Roman Pontiffs (especially the Apostolic Letter, Evangelii Nuntiandi of Pope Paul VI), in the context of the signs of the times, trying to discern where the Holy Spirit is leading the Church today, which concerns we must most earnestly take to heart, which thrusts to be especially attentive to, in order to be truly faithful and generous, responsive to God's will for us as his own people, and for the world of today.

4.3) To study, hopefully in some depth, the major questions and themes connected with the task of evangelization today:

--a renewed theology of missionary activity (especially for Asia);

--local Asian churches and inculturation of Christian faith and life;

--dialogue with other religious traditions in Asia (inter-religious dialogue);

--the Gospel, the Kingdom of God, development and liberation;

--basic Christian communities and ministries in the local churches in Asia;

--mission, prayer, spirituality and formation for mission;

--mission and the tasks of Christian education;

--mass media and evangelization, co-responsible evangelization and the involvement of "the whole Church in mission and evangelization".

- 4.4) To formulate some contemporary theological statements which (especially as coming from the Asian context) would express the reflection and the discernment undertaken in fulfillment of the mandate given by Vatican II's missionary decree, Ad Gentes, section 22, a text which in some ways forms the groundwork and basis for much of the present conference.
- 4.5) To clarify and deepen motivation for involvement in the tasks of evangelization today. To awaken a new interest in, and dedication to the tasks of evangelization among those who participate in the assembly. To quicken an awakening zeal and efforts for the spreading of the Gospel in the Third World nations, as a 'contribution' to the tasks of human development and integral human liberation (cf. Populorum Progressio and Evangelii Nuntiandi).
- 4.6) Finally, to lay down renewed guidelines for policies and planning, for the immediate future for the Church's missionary effort and for collaboration with, and support for, the labors of evangelization.
- 4.7) It is the hope and prayer of those who are sponsoring the Congress that a fresh and powerful impetus may emerge from this Congress for the task of mission and evangelization throughout the world.

5. Evaluation:

- 5.1) In general: My over-all evaluation of the Congress was extremely positive. It was very well prepared in advance and conducted in a well-organized fashion. The participation was excellent, especially in the Workshops. I believe the objectives were largely achieved.
- 5.2) Particular emphases were: the local Church is the focal point of mission; the local Church must be missionary; inculturation; dialogue with other religious traditions; the importance of Basic Christian Communities; prayer; witness; oneness with the poor; service.
- 5.3) I believe the Congress was a success largely because of its truly prayerful spirit and because of the concrete sharing of the participants. It was down to earth discussion of the mission of the Church, as contrasted to the overly theoretic cast that many such Conference seem to have.

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SOCIAL ACTION

In order to become the Church of the Poor, the best first step is to dissociate from the elites. They are the oppressors.

"This does not mean that we will cease to be civil and concerned for them. There is place for them in the Church of the poor if they give up their oppressive practices. To dissociate means that we free ourselves from reliance on the elite's ways of thinking, their money and their social approval. Let us back off from them so that we can see the harm they do.

Bishop Julio X. Labayen, ocd
International Congress on
Mission

Reference: Info on Human Development, Volume 6, No.11, December 1979.

CHURCH AND MISSION
IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD
ESPECIALLY IN THE THIRD WORLD CONTEXT

By

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INTRODUCTION

The study of the Church's mission of evangelization is a continuing process. The meetings in each country in preparation for the Synod of Bishops on Evangelization, the first Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference in Taipei, the Synod of 1974, the Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Nuntiandi" of Pope Paul VI, are some of the important landmarks in this on-going process.

In this reflection, the teaching of the Scriptures, the Council Documents, and the Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Nuntiandi" are the main sources of inspiration and guidance.

I. THE THIRD WORLD CHURCH

Various interpretations are given to the expression 'Third World'. For the present purposes the following will suffice: the first World is the West, dominated by capitalism; the Second is the East oppressed by communism; the Third is the South threatened by neo-colonialism under various disguises. To a large extent then, the Third World embraces that group of peoples who are making their debuts on the stage of present day world politics.

A. Its Peoples

While looking at the situation of the Church in the World, one becomes aware of a process of change in which the centre of gravity is slowly shifting into the Third World. In making this gravitational shift southwards, the Church is tending towards the "peoples of antiquity", Asia, Africa and Latin America have cultures of their own, some of them of great antiquity. Their peoples are perhaps more important--from the point of view of the history of culture, the origin of man and population growth --than the north. (1)

The Church is gravitating towards 'young peoples' with the high proportion of youth in their populations. 43% of the population in Asia, South America and 44% in Africa are under 15 years of age. Two thirds of the population of the three continents are under 25. The young Churches of the south are Churches of youth.

The Church is gravitating towards peoples in the spring time of their new (modern) life, remarkable for their optimism and freshness on the world scene, while not ready, at the same time paralyzed by poverty and social oppression of centuries.

(1) Walbert Bühlmann, OFM Cap. The Coming of the Third Church (St. Paul Publications, Slough, England, 1976)p.3. The contents of this book have been used also elsewhere in this first part.

The Church is gravitating towards poorer peoples. And there she finds the opportunity not only to become in a real sense, the 'Church of the poor' but also to have some experience of the goodness, humanity, simplicity and integrity of poor people. Perhaps through this shift, the Church will be able to speak like Mother Teresa when she received the Pandit Nehru Peace Prize in 1972 from the President of India: "The greatest gift I have received is the way I have been enriched by knowing and appreciating the poor. They are marvellous people".

The challenge for the Church in the Third World is to be the Church in the full sense, that is a home of love, a sign of hope and salvation, in a hemisphere of poverty and exploitation of political instability, of non-christian religions and seekers of truth.

B. Its Characteristics

1. Context of Living Religions

Religions are playing a major role in almost every sphere in most of the countries of the Third World, especially Asia. Excepting in the Philippines, in the Asian context they are non-christian religions. The traditional alliance of religions with the ruling class; the use of religion by the ruling class to pacify, distract, domesticate their subjects; the revolts of liberation which religion has inspired and fostered, directly or indirectly, from time to time; the role the Churches are playing at the moment in South America, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines and India: are examples of the influence that religions have on the lives of the peoples in the Third World. The ancient religious traditions still live among the masses, affecting them deeply.

Religiosity is strangely related to the poverty of the people. On the continent of Asia in particular, these two, religiosity and poverty are central factors.

Perhaps the Philippines will take time to appreciate the first, and modern Japan to see the second. But to the continent of Asia in particular, these two, religiosity and poverty, are central factors as old as the Buddha, perhaps much older. The ancient perennial struggle against poverty and suffering has in recent times become a colossal and effective force for liberation in the socialist movements of Asia. These movements have sharply questioned the role religions and cultures have been playing in the history of the continent. This role has been ambiguous: on the one hand, the religions have insisted on inner liberation without which even socialist movements will not succeed in their struggle for full humanity. On the other hand, religious and cultural systems have at least in the past played the role of legitimating feudal relationships and dampening any revolutionary struggle for liberation. (2)

There is a religious revivalism in almost all the major religions of the Third World. These religions are beginning to perceive the urgent need to meet the challenges that the Third World is facing, to be with the people in their struggles, to revive the religious fervour of the youth.

(2) Samuel Rayan, s.j., Asian Theological Conference, A Reflex of its Dynamics, ('Vidyajyoti', Ranchi, 1979)pp.246-260.

Islam deserves a special mention, because of its political and worldwide importance. The missionary activities undertaken by the Muslims all over the world from the very early days of Islam still continue and their number today amounts to over 550 million. Perhaps there is no other religion in the world that is spreading today as fast as Islam, especially in the African continent. The political resurgence of Islamic countries in West Asia, their interest in their Muslim brethren world over, the rise of Islamic theocratic states is an important aspect of Third World politics today. But the followers of Islam are also faced with all the problems of decolonization, modernization, industrialization, social development; their traditional religious ways and even their understanding of the Quran are challenged by the advances of science and secularism; their old self-sufficiency breaks down under the invasion of the world culture; atheism and materialism solicit adhesion. (3)

Briefly the Third World shows a longing for divine communion, i.e., for religious experience. It is most evident in Asia, but it is not limited to it. In some cases the thirst for religious experience manifests itself in an intense desire for human brotherhood, heralding in some way the words of St. John: God is love. He who lives in love, lives in God (1 Jn 4, 16).

The literature of the Third World throws light on some fundamental aspects of this religiosity; the mystique of liberation and commitment to work for others (South America), the tradition and experience of 'negritude' (Africa), the pre-eminence of the spiritual (Asia). H. Gunther says: "The poetry of 'negritude' is among the most moving and the most genial of this century. The black renaissance is probably the decisive spiritual event of the 20th century". By their religious spirit, they are capable of making the modern world in all its complexity more religious.

On the other hand, many, especially among the young, feel that religions and ideologies have failed not only to satisfy the thirst for interhuman justice, but even to facilitate a satisfying union with God.

2. Socio-Economic Situation

A quick glance at the socio-economic scene in the Third World reveals massive poverty and misery, oppression and exploitation, inequalities and injustice, glaring differences between rich and poor, population explosion, masses in revolt.

The oppressed peoples of the Third World are yearning for a just and human society. They strive for development; struggle against all forms of exploitation and enslavement; try to change inefficient and authoritarian political regimes, wrong and frustrating economic planning, and unjust structures, trade regulations which keep developing countries in perpetual and ever greater dependence on the different nations.

3. Political Situation

In many countries of the Third World the forces that were united during the struggle for independence have disintegrated once the common enemy has pulled out. Many of the old tribal, cultural and religious conflicts flare up again.

(3) Richard V. De Smet, Advances in Christian Muslim Dialogue "Service and Salvation", Nagpur Theological Conference on Evangelization, (Theological Publications in India, Bangalore 1973) pp.521-529.

Political instability, widespread corruption, lack of proper leadership are some of the salient features on the political scene of many of the Third World countries.

Many young nations are going in for excessive military spending to defend themselves against internal fissiparous tendencies and external attacks. The international peace commission in Stockholm has published the following figures: arms exported to the Third World cost more than 6 billion DM. While the average national income in these countries increased by 2% during the second half of the sixties, expenditure in arms increased during the same period by 7%. (4)

Instability has become a permanent feature of the Third World countries. Latin America (the most volcanic area) comes first with 62 regimes overthrown between 1945 and 1970. Only 7 out of the 24 states have not experienced a coup d'etat. Next, Africa, with 43 coups (some unsuccessful) in 24 countries between 1950 and 1972. Asia has been more fortunate; but not a few national heroes and founders, instead of finishing in the nation's pantheon, have been exiled or assassinated. (5)

Peoples of the Third World are yearning for a stable and just political system.

4. Youth

42% of the 2500 millions in the Third World are under 15; that is to say 1050 million youngsters are looking wide-eyed at this world of their hopes and longings. In the year 2000 they will be in their prime. What will the next 25 years bring them--and then the next millennium? Hopes fulfilled or disappointed?

Many young peoples are looking for deep and genuine religious experience. Our young people have (as the final statement of the First Plenary Assembly of Asian Bishops' Conference says) "all the splendid gifts that are theirs". They have freshness of outlook, vitality, creativity, courage, compassion, integrity, generosity, the open heart, willingness to learn".

"The youth in the Third World want to be 'modern'. They are turned resolutely to the future, rather than to the past. Theirs is a passionate concern for human freedom, dignity, justice. They search for meanings and values which will give sense, direction and solidity to their lives in a world of uncertainty and seeming meaninglessness". (6) At the same time, they lack leadership, are restless and are exploited by political parties.

5. Communism

The growing influence of communism in the Third World is a fact which cannot be met by opposition but should be understood and appreciated as a challenge and an opportunity.

(4) Herder Korrespondenz, 1972, pp.119-122.

(5) Walbert Buhlmann, op.cit., p.33.

(6) Julio R. Cardinal Rosales, On Youth and the Laity; "His Gospel to Our Peoples", Book III - Rome, (Manila, 1977), p.79.

The relationship between christianity and communism has undergone profound changes since their first encounter. Both have reached a point in their understanding of themselves which makes a genuine meeting in some specific areas possible. The growing aspiration towards a just society inspires deeper dialogue. Through contact with communists, and challenged by them, christians have realized more dearly the social dimension of their Faith.

What is the mission of the Church in this context of the Third World?

Before answering this question, let us briefly consider what is the mission of the Church in relation to the Kingdom of God.

II. MISSION AND KINGDOM

We must begin our reflection on mission and kingdom with the observation that the Church in the Third World is a Church increasingly alienated from its own people paradoxically through the kindness of Churches in affluent countries. The relatively massive financial help from these countries, whether for developmental or pastoral purposes, is making church institutions, churchmen, increasingly independent of the financial support of local believers. Hence there is little relationship in the standard of living of priests and religious, and of their people. While in catholic countries, the churchmen are in prosperous or adverse conditions along with the people, a drought in the Third World, or a wage freeze, affects the people, not the institutions or churchmen, who continue to be maintained by funds from abroad. So we have a church that is alienated from its peoples. This is the most tragic meaning of a "foreign" church. To understand the Church and the Mission as Jesus wanted let us go to the Scriptures.

A. In the Scriptures

Understanding 'Kingdom' we shall know the Church. Not only is the Kingdom of God the central theme of the public proclamation of Jesus (7) (Mk 1, 14f), the referent of most of his parables (Mt 13, 1-52), and the object of a large number of his sayings (Mk 8, 11f; Mk 9, 1; Lk 16, 16); it is also the content of the symbolic actions which form so large a part of his ministry--his table fellowship with tax-collectors and sinners (Mk 2, 13-17), his healings and exorcisms. A key text is the brief account of the Galilean preaching of Jesus in Mk 1, 14-15. Its formulation could be accounted for as follows:

	The time is fulfilled	early Christian apocalyptic
(- The Kingdom of God is at hand	
(Repent	
JESUS (Believe in the good news	early Christian mission preaching
(-	

(7) Cf. the survey of recent discussion in Norman Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus (London: SCM Press, 1963) 13-157; and in Goesta Lundstrom, The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1963).

Although Jesus steadfastly proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom and frequently attempted to describe. It obliquely in the allusive language of the parables, he nowhere tells us clearly just what the Kingdom really is. This is because the Kingdom of God is in fact a symbol, and as such impervious to conceptual definition. (8)

1. The Old Testament Background

'Kingdom of God' translates the Greek basileia tou theou of the Gospels, and this in turn stands for the Aramaic malkut di yy which Jesus would have used. Although nominal in form, the expression is verbal in meaning. It stands not for the territory ruled over by God ('kingdom'), nor even for his royal power ('kingship'), but for the concrete exercise of his power ('rule') in actions through which he shows himself to be king. The kingdom of God is God's kingly activity.

The theology of the times pictures this kingly activity of God in two different ways. God shows himself to be king by creating the universe and by liberating his people through his mighty deeds in history. We leave aside the concept of Kingdom as creation, as this way of conceiving the Kingdom is not of primary importance to the Old Testament, nor original to it. It is rather in her awareness of God as the Liberator King who sets his people free, that the specific note of Israel's theology is struck.

God is Liberator King, exercising an (ultimately) eschatological kingship, in as much as he intervenes in history to save his people from the situations of desperate peril they encounter. He rescues them from slavery in Egypt (Exodus), from starvation in the wilderness (Numbers), from annihilation by powerful enemies during the wars of the conquest (Joshua, Judges) and from exile in Babylon (Deuteronomy, Isaiah). It is in these mighty saving acts that Israel has its specific encounter with her God, experiencing him as the Covenant God deeply concerned about the concrete historical welfare of his people. Israel is his prized possession (Ex 19, 5; Dt 7, 6; Ps 135, 4); he is her Redeemer, (Is 41, 14; Jer 50, 34; Ps 78, 35).

There is a striking passage in Exodus 6, 6-7:

I am Yahweh
and I will bring you out from under the burden of the Egyptians
and I will deliver you from their bondage,
and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm
and with great acts of judgment,
and I will take you for my people and you shall know that
I am Yahweh, your God
who has brought you out from under the burden of the Egyptians.

Later on, God will make himself known under yet another name, revealing himself as 'abba, the 'dear Father' who loves all men with a universal and wholly unconditional love. But his name, before this new revelation through Jesus, remains Yahweh, and Yahweh means the God who redeems. Israel experiences God primarily as the liberator God, the redeemer.

(8) N. Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom (London: SCM 1977), pp.33-34.

Yet it is precisely this core experience of Israel which leads to the great creative tension which dominates the whole of her history. For while Israel trusts implicitly in the promises made to her liberator God, she does not experience the realization of these promises. What has been promised is the "land"--a comprehensive symbol for salvation, conceived of in a very material way, as freedom, peace, long life, prosperity (Ex 3, 17; Dt 28, 1-14). What is experienced is poverty, conflict, oppression, colonization, exile. Promise clashes with fulfilment, resulting in a tension which can be resolved only by projecting the fulfilment of the promise into the future. The promises of the liberator God will one day be fulfilled. God will one day fully liberate his people. God's kingdom (his definitive saving act) will one day come. The kingship of the liberator King, becomes an eschatological kingdom.

So the core experience of Israel (God experienced as the concerned and caring Lord of History) leads inevitably to the basic attitude of the Old Testament, an attitude of steadfast hope. From end to end, the Old Testament is a book of hope, just as the New Testament is from end to end a book of love. But this hope takes various forms in the course of Israel's history. Two forms are especially important, because they have largely determined the thought patterns of the New Testament, and indeed Jesus' own understanding of his mission. They are messianic expectation and apocalyptic hope.

Messianic expectation looks forward to the realization of God's promise of liberation through a descendant of David, who will be raised up by God as the 'Messiah', that is, the 'anointed one' or the king par excellence. The Messiah is to establish a worldwide kingdom of justice, peace and prosperity in which all the promises symbolized by the "land" will finally be realized. (9) The hope expressed in Davidic messianism (at least in its earlier form) is a thoroughly this-worldly one. God's promises are to be realized in a this-worldly kingdom to be established on earth and within our history.

Davidic messianism received a severe setback with the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile of 587 B.C. After this, not unnaturally Davidic messianism find itself giving way to a new type of expectation strongly coloured by influences from the Persian and Babylonian religions which Israel had encountered during her exile. This is apocalyptic hope. This looks forward to an imminent, catastrophic intervention of God, in which he will destroy 'this evil age' and usher in 'the age to come' by creating 'a new heaven and a new earth' (Is 65, 25) as the home of the risen just (Dan 12, 1-3). Apocalyptic hope, unlike messianism, is strictly eschatological. It foresees salvation not as the fulfilment of our history, but as its end.

Davidic messianism and apocalyptic hope are only two of the many forms that the hope of Israel assumed at the time of Jesus.

(9) On Davidic Messianism, cfr E. Jenni, art. "Messiah, Jewish", in Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible, III (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962) 360-64; and S. Mowinkel. He that Cometh (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956) pp.155-186.

2. New Testament

All these varied forms of hope are taken up into the expression 'kingdom of God'. For 'kingdom of God' is not, as we have seen, a concept which can be precisely defined, but polyvalent symbol standing for all Israel's hopes of liberation. When therefore Jesus announces the coming of the Kingdom, what he is saying is that Israel's long sustained hope of liberation (no matter what form this takes) is about to be, indeed is being fulfilled. That is, it is being realized but in a new, more perfect and therefore wholly unexpected way.

All Israel's expectations, no matter what their form, looked for liberation through an outpouring of power. Davidic messianism relied on the political power of the ideal king. The zealot nationalists of Jesus' time opted for the power of arms, wielded in a 'holy war' waged for and under God. The Pharisees trusted in the moral power generated by their perfect observance of the law. The apocalyptists hoped for a mighty display of cosmic power by God. All such ways are rejected by Jesus (Mt 4, 1-11). For him power is not the key. There can be no genuine liberation through an exercise of power, for power does not really free: it merely creates new structures of unfreedom. The only truly liberating force in the world is love, and it is just this that Jesus offers when he proclaims the coming of the Kingdom.

For when Jesus announces that the Kingdom of God has come (i.e., that God is revealing himself as the liberator king by definitively fulfilling the hopes of his people), he is drawing on his own experience of God as 'abba' the dear Father who has declared his unconditional love for men. It is this revelation of God's love (God as 'abba') that is the true content of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom. For it is only when we encounter this love and respond to it appropriately in trusting surrender, that we experience genuine freedom as individuals and in community. The Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus, then, is ultimately his revelation of God's unconditional love.

The offer of God's love that the Kingdom symbolizes demands from us a response. This response has been defined by Jesus as 'repentance'.

Although the Greek word for 'repent' used in the Gospels means literally 'to change one's mind', 'to have afterthoughts', and therefore 'to have remorse for some one action or the other', this is not what Jesus intends by his call to repentance. For underlying the Greek metanoein of the New Testament is the prophetic ideal of repentance, expressed in the well known Hebrew shub (= to be converted, to turn), which in the Old Testament always signifies the turning of the whole man to God (Is 31, 6; Jer 3, 12-14; Hos 14, 1). (10) In line with this the repentance demanded by Jesus involves the whole man and not some one compartment of his life; and it involves him in a dramatic positive movement of turning away from sin.

(10) E. Wuerthwein, "Repentance and Conversion in the Old Testament", in G. Kittel (ed) Theological Dictionary of the New Testament IV (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1967) 980-989.

When the revelation of God's love (the Kingdom) meets its appropriate response in man's trusting acceptance of this love (repentance), there begins a mighty movement of personal and societal liberation which sweeps through human history. The movement brings freedom inasmuch as it liberates each individual from the inadequacies and obsessions that shackle him. It fosters fellowship because it empowers free individuals to exercise their concern for each other in genuine community, and it leads on to justice, because it impels every true community to adopt the just societal structures which alone make freedom and fellowship possible. Freedom, fellowship and justice are thus the parameters of the Kingdom's thrust towards the total liberation of man. Together they spell out the significance of the Kingdom, and tell us what the Kingdom, in practice, means today.

3. The Marks of the Kingdom

In Jesus' proclamation, the Kingdom of God demands the conversion of the heart 'metanoia', which implies a new outlook of our human life in all its dimensions. The main dimensions of this conversion are the following:

a. The New Relationship to God: At Jesus' baptism, heaven opens, the 'voice' of the Father acknowledges Jesus as the beloved Son, on whom the Holy Spirit descends. For Jesus, God is 'Abba' the loving and beloved Father, in whom his life is sheltered, with whom He is most intimately united, to whom He owes unconditional obedience. For all men, Kingdom of God means that we are included in this relationship to God, who forgives and loves us unconditionally, in whom we have the absolute assurance in every situation of our life, who claims undivided loyalty. The Kingdom of God is rooted in and based on this new relation to God. Without it the Kingdom of God does not exist for Jesus.

b. Kingdom of God implies the newness of man, the new integrity, dignity and freedom of man, the liberation from all alienations. The model of this new humanity is Jesus himself who stands in absolute freedom above all deceptive supports of human existence of wealth, political power, social acceptance and conformity, all forms of legalistic and ritualistic self-righteousness, apart from all parties and pressure groups of this world, relying exclusively on his Father.

Jesus calls his followers to the same integrity and freedom. This is the theme of the sermon on the mount: it contains an entirely new scale of values, the beatitudes, freedom from clinging to material support (Mt 6, 19-34), a change of heart, not the mere exterior observance of the laws (Mt 5, 21-47). The christian life in its main aspects (of charity, prayer, sacrifice) free from the concern of the image before people, lived only before God (Mt 6, 1-18). Man is good or bad not by ritual observance or contamination but through the decision of his freedom, by 'what comes from the human heart' (Mt 15, 19).

c. Jesus displays in his life the new relationship to the neighbour: He is 'man for others', intimately concerned with the people and their needs, spiritual and temporal, caring in a special way for the underprivileged, despised, degraded. His concern is personal, not limited to exterior help but committed to personal service, 'not to be served, but to serve and to lay down his life as a ransom for many' (Mk 10, 45).

Jesus demands the same attitude from his disciples: He wants them to feel responsible for the people when they are hungry (Jn 6, 5-10). The call to repentance is explicitated mostly in terms of the relation to the neighbour. Already the Baptist tells the people that conversion consists in abstention from exploitation and oppression and in active sharing with the neighbour (Lk 3, 10-14). Jesus consistently complements the commandment of the love of God with that of the love of the neighbour and exemplifies it in the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10, 25-37).

The fellowship of the Kingdom is strongly urged by Jesus, who both practices and preaches a radical and absolutely universal concern for every one in need (L, 6, 27-36; 10, 25-37). The great commandment of Judaism, ('hear O Israel') of Dt 6, 4-6, which urges us to love God with all our hearts, is modified by Jesus into his 'love-commandment' (Mk 12, 28-34) by the addition brings 'neighbour' on to a level with God, urging us to love both God and neighbour at the same time, but it profoundly modifies our understanding of the shema. For by adding Lev 19, 18 to Dt 6, 1-5 Jesus is probably proposing a new interpretation of the great commandment of Judaism. To love God with all one's heart now means to love one's neighbour as oneself. One loves God by loving neighbour. The love commandment of Jesus, is then, that we love God in neighbour.

This is how the New Testament understood Jesus' love commandment. Except for Mk 12, 28-34 and Lk 11, 42 (an obscure woe which condemns the Pharisees for scarcely ever speaks about our loving God. Instead it urges on us the law of loving one's neighbour as oneself (Gal 5, 14; Rom 13, 8; 1 Pet 4, 8; Heb 13, 1), or the 'New Commandment' of Jesus that we love one another as he has loved us (Jn 13, 34; 15, 12; 1 Jn 3, 23; 4, 7-12; 2 Jn 5). Our appropriate response to God's love for us, is not that we love God in return (for God cannot be the object of our concern: 'no one has ever seen God', but that we love our neighbour (1 Jn 3, 19-21)--in whom we encounter God (Mt 25, 31-46). Fellowship, that is, radical concern for the neighbour (agape) thus becomes the great value of the Kingdom.

d. This new life is animated by absolute hope. Jesus not only preaches the absolute trust in God's providence, but fearlessly faces the failure of his work: "My Father is with me". (Jn 16, 32). He knows that there is a life, the real life which is lost if we try to keep it, which is won if we are ready courageously to give it (Mk 8, 35).

In the disciples this hope broke down on Good Friday. It was reawakened and finally confirmed on Easter in the encounter with the risen Lord.

Thus Jesus stands against two extremes. He rejects the idea of an earthly kingdom with blueprints for the social, economic, political order to be established. He does not introduce a new theocracy in which earthly realities and Kingdom of God would coincide. With equal firmness He rejects a more eschatological kingdom, which has to be expected, which is to come only on the ruins of the present world and society.

For Jesus the kingdom is present, with its demands on our present life, with its new outlook, which is meant to form the individual and collective conscience of the people. This new orientation has to be realized in whatever social, economic or political

structure people live. This orientation is the frame in which the church has to understand her mission in the present time.

B. In the Consciousness of Third World

It will however be the decisive task of third world theology to 'translate' the Christian message into a language which is understood by our people and has a resonance in their hearts. The 'Kingdom of God' belong to the Jewish world and had its meaning in the context of their history. It will hardly be understood by people whose minds have been formed by the thinking and experience of Buddha, of Hindu saints and sages, of Confucius and Laotse, all of whom have no access to a concept like 'the kingdom of God'. Would such a concept have any appeal to the intellectual elite of Asia who have been studying at western universities or even trained at Asian centres of learning? Could we imagine that such a concept as 'the kingdom of God' would be 'good news' for the chinese, should they ever turn again to the catholic church after their traumatic experience under chairman Mao Tse-tung? Whether they have been deeply influenced by democratic ideas or communist ideologies, a king will hardly figure in their belief that religion is something that had better go to the museum.

'Mission' has acquired in its historic development in the countries of the Third World a connotation that is permeated with bitter colonial experiences and, in fact, could easily convey a wrong notion of what 'mission' actually intends, i.e., the building up of self-supporting, self-reliant local churches, and not of ecclesiastical territories dependent on structures outside their own countries for their material and spiritual support and survival. (11)

Maybe we can re-formulate the mission of the church to the people of the Third World today as 'preaching the good news of Jesus Christ, the liberator'. This term 'liberator', if re-translated into Asian concepts and not taken in its present South American version, takes up the cry of thousands of years still reverberating through the length and breadth of the Asian continent, for liberation. Indian sages have sung for 4000 years:

"From the unreal lead me to the real
from darkness lead me to light,
from death lead me to immortality."

(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad I,III,28)

This cry of the Asian soul is today echoed within a new context described above. This clear-cut concept 'Christ the Liberator' at the same time does away with the illusion that man could free himself from sin and all the sinful structures that are consequences, individual and collective, of man's falling away from God. Liberation is understood here in its fullest theological sense, as a freeing from sin and all sinful structures, especially in the social sector, that are consequences of sin, to make man free for God and the infinity for which he has been created by God's love.

(11) Kittel, Dictionary under "Basileia".

Many of our concepts, like the 'kingdom of God', have to be re-thought thoroughly, if they are to be presented to the Third World today. The fact that we have not done this re-thinking sufficiently in the past, might be part of the explanation why the good news has just not been understood in Asia and other countries of the Third World.

The church, the kingdom, 'mission', together with the way to bring them to the people of the Third World are one. And yet, there is a world of difference, depending on where we put the emphasis on these terms and, more, on these realities. There is even a danger that we might use a wrong key that will never open the heart of the Third World. Therefore, we will have to translate the message of the 'kingdom' into our own cultural, sociological, religious context, in whatever part of the Third World we live. Unless this is done right from the beginning we might miss the very goal towards which we are working.

As long as we apply the traditional concept of 'mission', especially as developed during the colonial period, we will come to no conclusion and find no solution. We will be disturbed still more if we identify 'missions' totally with the church that is running them,--a church that in many places has not been able to put down any roots and, therefore, is unable to produce any fruits. (12)

(12) Dialogue VI nn.1-2, 1979, Colombo, "Asia's Search for Full Humanity".

End of Part I

(The second part of Bishop D'Souza's address will be printed in the next Bulletin).

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 : DOCUMENTATION :

(List of the Papers presented at the International Missionary Congress, Manila, December 1979).

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Title of Document</u>
4/3692-1	<u>Message of the Delegates of the International Congress on Mission, Manila 7th December, 1979.</u> (15 pages)
4/3692-2	<u>Local Asian Churches and the Tasks of Mission (Inculturation) (W-II Consensus Paper)</u> (6 pages)
4/3692-3	Justinus Cardinal Darmojuwono, Archbishop of Semarang, Paper on <u>Inculturation for the International Mission Congress, Manila, 2-7 December, 1979.</u> (15 pages).

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Title of Document</u>
4/3692-4	<u>"Evangelization" as Seen from the Chinese Viewpoint</u> by Rev. John Tong. (IMC:PP:W-I:1) (11 pages)
4/3692-5	<u>Mission in the 1980s</u> by Rev. Thomas F. Stransky, csp. (IMC:SR:W-I:1), from <u>Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research</u> quarterly publication of the OVERSEAS MINISTRY STUDY CENTER, April 1979. (5 pages)
4/3692-6	<u>Inculturation and Tasks of Mission</u> by Rev. Michael M. Amaladoss, sj. (IMC:PP:W-II:1) (15 pages)
4/3692-7	<u>God's Word in Japanese Culture and Tradition</u> by Rev. Joseph Sasaki. (IMC:PP:W-II:2) (16 pages)
4/3692-8	<u>Jesus -- A Sign for Christians and Muslims</u> by Rev. Michael Fitzgerald, wf. (IMC:PP:W-III:1) (21 pages)
4/3692-9	<u>Dialogue in a Buddhist Context</u> by Rev. Marcello Zago, omi. (IMC:PP:W-III:2) (19 pages)
4/3692-10	<u>Development, Dialogue and Evangelization</u> by Rev. John B. Chethimattam, cmi. (IMC:PP:W-III:3) (21 pages)
4/3692-11	From Kurien Kunnumpuram: <u>Inculturation in Vatican II Papal Seminary, Pune, India.</u> (IMC:SR:W-III:5) (8 pages)
4/3692-12	<u>Preaching the Gospel in the Asian Social Context</u> , by The Most Rev. Julio Xavier Labayen, OCD, D.D. (IMC:PP:W-IV:1) (13 pages)
4/3692-13	<u>From Servitude to Service--A Reflection on the Poor and Liberation</u> , by Rev. John Chang-Yik. (IMC:PP:W-IV:2) (14 pages)
4/3692-14	<u>The Participation of Lay Men and Women in the Decisions of the Church as Ministry</u> , by John M. de Mesa. (IMC:PP:W-V:1) (25 pages)
4/3692-15	<u>Ordained Ministries in the Local Churches of Asia</u> , by S. J. Emmanuel. (IMC:PP:W-V:2) (19 pages)
4/3692-16	<u>The Mystery of the Word and the Reality</u> , by Rev. Vincent Shigeto Oshida, op. (IMC:PP:W-VI:1) (11 pages)
4/3692-17	<u>Formation and Spirituality for Mission</u> , by Rev. Adolfo Nicolas, sj. (IMC:PP:W-VI:2) (29 pages)
4/3692-18	<u>Co-Responsibility in Evangelization</u> , by Rev. Karl Müller, svd. (IMC:PP:W-VII:1) (18 pages)
4/3692-19	<u>The Collaboration Between the Churches Throughout the World and the Tasks of Mission Today</u> , by W. Rita Fernando. (IMC:PP:W-VII:2) (13 pages)
4/3692-20	<u>Relationships Between the First World and Third World Churches in the Matter of Mission</u> , by Rev. James P. Noonan, mm. (IMC:PP:W-VII:1) (4 pages)
4/3692-21	<u>Media and Evangelization</u> , by Rev. Cornelio Lagerwey, msc. (IMC:PP:W-VIII ₁ :1) (9 pages)
4/3692-22	<u>Education for Evangelization</u> , by Rev. Rolando R. Dizon, fsc, Ph.D. (IMC:PP:W-VIII:1) (14 pages)

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Title of Document</u>
4/3692-23	<u>Evangelization and Non-Formal Education</u> , by Sister Constance Pacis, cfic. (IMC:PP:W-VIII:2) (22 pages)
4/3692-24	<u>Evangelization and Non-Formal Education, An Outline</u> , by Sr. Constance Pacis, cfic. (IMC:PP-O:W-VIII:2) (6 pages)
4/3692-25	<u>The Task of Evangelization Through Catholic Higher Education in Asia</u> , by Rev. Paul P. Zwaenepoel, cism, Association of Catholic Universities of the Philippines University of Santo Tomas, Manila. (IMC:PP:W-VIII:3) (29 pages)
4/3692-26	Consensus Paper Workshop III--Dialogue with Other Religious Traditions in Asia. <u>The Urgency of Inter-religious Dialogue for the Local Churches in Asia</u> . (4 pages)

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A summer School in Islamics will be held from June 30th to July 25th. Language of instruction is English. Courses in the 1st week centre around fundamentals of Islam; second week, theology and culture; third week, daily life and fourth week, Christianity and Islam. Cost of the course is 50,000 lire (accommodation and meals not provided).

For further information, consult the brochure in the documentation centre or write to:

Pontifical Institute
of Arabic Studies
Piazza S. Apollinare, 49
00186 ROME
Tel. 656.11.31/656.15.92

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Le Suore Missionarie del Cuore Immacolato di Maria hanno il piacere di annunciarvi che il Capitolo Generale ha eletto:

Suor Ramona Mendiola, Superiora Generale;
Suor Marie-Louise Vanderstraeten,
Suor Matilda Fernando,
e Suor Armandine De Meyer, Assistenti,

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IAMS--The International Association for Mission Studies is an international, interconfessional and inter-disciplinary professional society for the scholarly study of Christian witness and its impact in the world. Membership in 1979 included nearly 600 members of which 125 are from the Third World.

The last international congress was held in 1978 at Maryknoll, New York. The January issue of Missiology 1979 gives the papers of this congress. (The Sedos Bulletin of 15th November printed one of the papers, "The Spiritual Dimension of the World Order" by Robert Muller). Further information may be obtained from: The General Secretary, IAMS, c/o Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research, Boerhaavelaan 43, 2334 ED Leiden, The Netherlands.

SEDOS
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AFRICAN MEETINGS
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Over the past months, four meetings have been held to discuss the recruitment of African men and women to international congregations and the various types of formation programmes which exist. The final meeting of the series will be held on:

Tuesday, 4th March
4 p.m. at the Generalate
of the Oblate Fathers

The following points will be discussed:

- 1) a. The contribution of African religious to international congregations.
b. How have the congregations incorporated these contributions into the congregations?
c. What are the difficulties in doing so?
d. What attempts should be made in this area of inculturation within the religious community to respond to the African vocation?
- 2) Participants in the meeting are asked to bring:
 - names of study/formations centres for Religious in Africa;
 - names of any publications on religious life in Africa.
- 3) At the end of the meeting, members will be asked what further study needs to be done through Sedos (other organizations) on this topic.

We print below, Father Nkiere Kena's stimulating talk given at the February 5th meeting:

**VIVRE EN AFRICAIN DANS UNE CONGREGATION MISSIONNAIRE
INTERNATIONALE**

By Nkiere Kena, cicm

Un jour, j'avais dix ans, ensemble avec quelques camarades d'école primaire, nous sommes allés voir notre Père missionnaire qui vivait seul dans notre village. Et nous lui avons posé cette question: "Père, êtes-vous orphelin et sans famille?" Lui répondit: "non". Il nous montra même les photos de membres de sa famille. Il a dû se dire: "quels drôles de gars qui s'intéressent à ma famille.." Pour les enfants africains que nous étions, venir vivre loin de sa famille, sans plus aucun lien avec elle, dans une terre étrangère et ayant comme seul but dans sa vie de venir nous parle de Dieu, comme seule protection sa prière, était un fait incompréhensible qui nous intriguait! Ce fait divers de ma jeunesse est devenu pour moi maintenant une parabole, riche en signification profonde, que j'essaierai de dévoiler à propos du sujet qui nous occupe.

1. Eloigné de sa famille

Pour un negro-africain, les relations humaines ont une signification vitale et forment la trame de sa personnalité. Parmi celles-ci, les liens familiaux occupent une place privilégiée. Nous aimons vivre ensemble et nous ressentons profondément les liens qui nous unissent: membres d'une même famille, d'un même village, d'une même tribu, d'une même région, d'un même continent, frères du monde entier.

D'autre part, l'Afrique aujourd'hui est meurtrie par les luttes tribales et raciales. Elle a été humiliée par des étrangers et elle est divisée par ses propres fils. Pour tout homme, cette situation est un profond défi.

Entrant dans une Congrégation missionnaire internationale à majorité européenne, d'une certaine manière, je suis un "provocateur". J'abandonne la lutte, la revanche. Car les relations avec les Blancs appellent les Africains, très facilement, à la vengeance. Et pour les Blancs, les relations avec les Noirs sont aussi une véritable gageure: les Noirs sont si surprenants! Il y a là donc pour tous les deux un défi énorme: le patron de hier se fait frère du colonisé de hier, le colonisé de hier se fait frère du patron de hier.

Ce conflit, ce tiraillement intérieur ne peut être résolu que par la violence ou bien, en se dépassant, en marchant ensemble sur la route d'une nouvelle fraternité. C'est là un fait prophétique de grande valeur. Nous ne sommes plus des étrangers les uns envers les autres--"il n'y a plus ni juif ni barbare, ni homme ni femme, ni homme libre ni esclave" (Gal. 3,28)--mais ce sont tous des frères. Frères, non pas par la volonté des hommes, nés de la chair et du sang, mais nés de Dieu (Jn 1,13), frères à cause de Jésus-Christ. Etre africain ou accueillir des africains dans une Congrégation internationale nous oblige à être prophètes: être signe d'une humanité nouvelle en Jésus-Christ.

2. Loin de sa propre terre

La terre, sa terre, est très importante pour un negro-Africain. Il se sent très lié à elle. La terre est belle et riche et généreuse: la forêt et les rivières, les champs et les villages. La terre le nourrit et lui rend la vie possible, agréable.

D'autre part, il y a aussi la faim et la sécheresse, les maladies et la mort. Il y a aussi l'étranger qui vient exploiter la terre, sa terre, avec de gros moyens, sans respect pour cette terre. Et lui ne sait pas en tirer sa subsistance! Ici aussi, il y a un réel défi pour un africain et un européen qui vivent la relation avec la terre dans une dimension culturelle différente.

Vu avec les yeux de la foi, Dieu s'est lié à cette terre, Il se l'est mariée car Il l'aime. Et comme Lui, nous devons l'aimer à notre tour, n'importe quelle partie de cette terre. La terre n'appartient pas seulement à tel groupe d'hommes ou à tel autre, Africains, Américains ou Européens: elle donne un abri à tous les hommes. La terre est nôtre et nous l'aimons. L'Italie, ce pays que nous habitons maintenant, est une bénédiction pour moi. Cette terre me nourrit, je l'aime, Je ne la regarde pas comme étrangère, je ne peux me contenter de mon statut d'étranger pour elle. Je mange ce que la terre produit ici, comme aussi un missionnaire ne doit pas faire venir d'Europe sa nourriture, s'il aime vraiment la terre où il habite. Le fait d'habiter une terre différente de la

