
MISSION IN THE 1980s

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The Editor has asked for an article on "Issues for Mission in the 1980s." I am no prophet. There is a vast area of discussion and I do not know what will appear to have been the crucial issue when we come to look back on ~~the decade now~~ beginning. Contemporary "trends" are, I think, unreliable guides. All I can attempt is to pick up one of the contemporary issues and suggest some of the new questions that I think need to be asked.

Contextualisation: I take, then, the contemporary debate about "contextualization." No proof is needed for the statement that this is a live issue. The word itself, if I understand rightly, arose from the recognition that the older words such as "adaptation" and "indigenization" were misleading. The former implied that the message brought by the missionary is the 'unadapted' gospel, the pure truth unadulterated by any cultural admixture. The latter tended to direct attention to the traditional elements in the receptor cultures and to seek to interpret the gospel through these, often at a time when the people concerned were in fact turning away from these traditions.

The intention of the word "contextualization" - if I understand it rightly, was to point to the insertion of the gospel into the living situation of the people concerned so that it was related to the living questions that they were asking, not so much about the past as about the future.

Why has the debate about contextualization become so intense? I suppose that it is because of the recognition that the cultural dominance of the old "Christendom" can no longer be assumed. Among the peoples of Asia and Africa, recovering their confidence in their own cultures and shaking off the suffocating power that was exercised by the culture of the Western nations during and after the colonial period, Christians become aware of the extent to which the gospel has been presented in a purely Western form and seek to find their own ways of grasping it in the terms of their own cultures. Among the churches of the Western world there is a corresponding recognition of the fact that the gospel is not communicated at all unless the culture of the receptor people is taken far more seriously than it often was in the "Great Century" of missions.

The problems: All this is familiar, and in repeating it I am merely pointing to a vast jungle of complex problems--problems about hermeneutics, about communication theory, about the relation of the gospel to history, about law and gospel, and about many other things. I only want to draw attention to two points at which I think the discussion needs to take a new direction. The first is a relatively minor point, which I mention without developing; the second is the one on which I want to focus.

(1) Two kinds of "Third World" theology: The first point is this. The debate about contextualization among the churches of the Third World is understandably dominated by the struggle to break free from the embrace of Western ideas. It is carried on (necessarily) by those who have themselves thoroughly mastered the Western traditions in theology, having been trained in the leading universities and seminaries of the West. The Third World theology, which has become a desirable addition to the libraries of the West, is all written in European languages and addressed to those who live and move in the world of thought that that implies.

But there is also another kind of Third World theology--namely, that which is being continuously produced in the languages of the churches of the Third World--in the form of preaching, catechesis, song, story, and drama. The volume of this material is very great, but it is rarely translated into the languages of Europe. Yet it represents the real fruit of the day-by-day struggle of the Christians of these lands to interpret the gospel to their contemporaries.

My point here is that there is often very little contact between these two kinds of Third World theology. Working in different languages, they seldom meet. Yet they imperatively need each other. The first without the second can become essentially a negative protest against the Western tradition rather than a real communication of the gospel to the peoples of the Third World. The second without the first can become static and irrelevant, encapsulated within the theological categories of a former era. I am happy to note that the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (Bangalore) has begun serious study of some of the Christian poets who have written in the Indian languages, and there may well be analogous moves in other areas of which I am unaware.

It will always be extremely difficult to bring the insights of this "vernacular" Third World theology into the mainstream of the ecumenical debate, but without it that debate will be beating the air. The only way in which it can be done is by the kind of initiative that has been taken in Bangalore, and which I hope will be carried much further.

(2) Contextualization in the West: My second point is, however, the one that I wish to develop, and it is this. Western missiologists are debating with intense earnestness the questions that arise from the effort to "contextualize" the gospel in all the cultures of humankind from Peru to Papua. I do not find an effort of comparable intensity to wrestle with the question of contextualization in the contemporary culture of the West. Yet it is the West that ought to be giving missiologists their most worrying questions.

It is in the West that the church appears to be continuously losing ground. It is typically the product of Western "enlightened" culture to whom the gospel appears irrelevant nonsense. Yet one does not find (at least in my limited reading) that missiologists are giving the same intense and sustained attention to the problem of finding the "dynamic equivalent" for the gospel in Western society as they are giving to that problem as it occurs in the meeting with peoples of the Third World.

Here let me confess that (inevitably) I am reflecting on my own experience. After a lifetime spent in India I now struggle with the problem of communicating the gospel in the comfortable suburb of an English city. And, from this angle, I am bound to reflect with some wry amusement on the anxiety shown by some of my missiological friends about the danger that the churches of the Third World should be led by their eagerness for contextuality into the morasses of syncretism. What is obvious to a returned missionary is that English Christianity is a prime example of syncretism.

Christianity as practiced in most of our churches does 'not' call in question the basic assumptions of the normal Englishman. Christians are 'not' distinguishable as people who obviously live by different commitments from their neighbors. And I should doubt whether it is normal on the other side of the water to find that the churches are regarded as centers of "un-American activities"!

That great interpreter of the gospel to Hindus, A. G. Hogg, died too soon to learn the blessed word "contextualization," but he spent his life doing what that word intends. He summed up the essentials of the matter in the phrase "challenging relevance." The gospel must be heard as relevant. It must speak of things

that are real things in the lives of the hearers. It must therefore begin by accepting their issues, using their models, and speaking their language. But relevance alone is not enough. The gospel must at the same time challenge the whole world-view of its hearers. It must cause them to question things that they have never questioned. It must bring them to the place where they hear spoken to their whole world of understanding and experience that word of grace and judgment which marks the end of one world and the beginning of another, a death and a new birth.

How can the church become the bearer of that word of grace and judgment for the Western culture with which it has lived so long in an almost total identification?

That, to my mind, is the most pressing missiological issue for the next decade. For centuries the churches in the West have seen themselves as the guardians and sustainers of the culture of which they have been a part. They have not - in general - seen themselves as the bearers of God's judgment upon this culture. If they had done so, they would have learned again that "challenging relevance" means, in the end, suffering, and that suffering is the fundamental form of Christian witness (martyria).

From a missiological point of view, it seems to me that one of the most significant facts of the contemporary world is the fact that the churches in the USSR (Orthodox, Baptist, and Pentecostal) are not only continuing to exist but are winning converts to Christ out of a society dedicated to a totally secular and atheist view of humankind. This seems to be the only part of the Western world in which the church is not losing ground but gaining it. And it is significant that the witness of Russian Christians has been and is conformed precisely to that which the New Testament indicates as the essential form of witness--that endurance of rejection and suffering which comes from bearing witness to the truth in the face of the lie.

Christianity and the Enlightenment: The Stalinist form of Marxism represents an extreme development of that view of humankind and the world which, in the period that we call (significantly) the Enlightenment, replaced the Christian view as the dominant model by which Western people undertook to understand and manage their affairs. The Enlightenment took the autonomous reason of human beings to be the bearer of their history, and therefore saw the Christian tradition as a bondage from which people had to be delivered.

Looking back over the three centuries that have passed, we can see that while the churches struggle to retain their traditional hold upon Western society, they lost the struggle and retreated into the private sector where they could exist without challenging the 'cultus publicus,' which rules in the world of public affairs.

The traditional machinery, which had sought to impose some sort of ethical rules upon economic life, were dismantled in the name of human freedom and the era of the "free market" began, in which everyone was free to pursue one's own interests with the maximum of enterprise and the "invisible hand" would ensure that all worked for the common good.

Marxism - capitalism: Marxism represents the revolt of the victims of this ideology while remaining within the general world-view of the Enlightenment. It has seen even a privatized religion as a threat to the perfection of humankind and has therefore forced the churches into the position where they have to choose between compromise and suffering. Insofar as they have chosen the latter, they have become places where the promised witness of the Holy Spirit is being given so powerfully as to "convict the world."

Churches under the capitalist system have not been forced to make this choice. They have been seduced into compromise. The capitalist system, placing self-interest at the center of the entire philosophy of society, is no less total a contradiction of the gospel than Marxism. But the churches of the West have accepted for so long the position of tolerated beneficiaries of the system that they have almost lost the power to question it. In the effort to be "relevant" to the "modern world," they have almost lost the power to challenge it. And the forms of Christian teaching and example that they have carried to the rest of the world have been deeply imbued with values derived not from the gospel but from the post-Enlightenment ideology of the Western world.

A new situation - world-wide Church: Now, however, we are in a new situation. Western society is showing every sign of disintegration. Its claim to be the bearer of "enlightenment" to the rest of the world is rejected with growing violence. The church has become a genuinely worldwide society in which powerful voices can and do speak the Word of God to Western Christians from standpoints in other cultures.

I think that the Western churches are now challenged to a fresh and urgent examination of the relation of the gospel to Western culture. It is here that the problem of contextualization is most urgent. An enormous amount of Western theology has been occupied with the question of restating the gospel in terms of "modern thought". But this can be done in two ways. It can be done by those who take "modern thought" as providing the fundamental models and axioms into which the gospel has to be fitted. Or it can be done in a truly missionary way; standing within the tradition of Christian faith, worship, and discipleship, taking the biblical axioms and models as fundamental, it can seek to bring the word of judgment and grace to bear upon the whole world that comes to expression in "modern thought."

I am not advocating a biblicist fundamentalism; fundamentalism and liberalism are twin products of Enlightenment rationalism. I am speaking about something that is known in practical experience, a kind of discipleship that is open at the same time to Western culture and to the testimony of Christians in other cultures, and which is totally committed to obedience to Jesus as he leads us along the way of the cross. It is in that kind of discipleship that the promise of the Holy Spirit is given both to convict the world and to guide the church into the truth.

The church that practices this kind of contextualization will not be a strong and "successful" church. It will be a church that is spoken against. It will be seen as a threat to the powers that rule society. But it will be a witnessing church in the fundamental meaning of that word.

I hope that the great work that has been done during the last decade in exploring the meaning of contextualization in relation to non-Western cultures may, in the decade now beginning, enable us to undertake with comparable energy and seriousness the exploration of the problem of contextualization in relation to the powerful paganism of our Western world.

Reference: OCCASIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, Vol. 4, No. 4 - Oct. 1980.

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La Mission: "La mission est ici, la mission est là bas. Des gens partent et participent à la mission de l'Eglise au service de laquelle ils se mettent. Des gens restent ici et leur rôle est le même".

Reference: Le Pasteur Maurice Pont dans Peuples du Monde. Jan. 1981, No. 138.

WAYS OF PEACE AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

(Address at the Inauguration of the Roman Catholic Lectureship
at the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England, Feb. 19th, 1980.)

Richard Friedli, op.

(Dans le climat actuel de violence et contre-violence les observations de Richard Friedli sur la mission de l'Eglise et le pacifisme ont besoin d'être considérées sérieusement. L'accord général qu'il y a une grande option sur la violence parmi les pratiquants et une présence marquée de tendances répressives et punitives paraît d'être démontré par les développements actuels.

Quand les plus hautes autorités aux Etats-Unis déclarent que les efforts pour avancer les droits humains seront remplacés tout court par efforts de combattre le terrorisme, on est forcé de demander si tout mouvement de protestation contre la violence institutionnalisée sera désormais classifié comme "terroriste".

Dans le premier article de ce numéro Leslie Newbegin se demande carrément si l'Eglise de l'Europe et de l'Amérique du Nord peut provoquer ou "condamner" les cultures occidentales avec lesquelles elle a vécu pendant tellement longtemps dans une identité totale. Il se peut bien que la voix de vraie protestation et le mouvements vers la vraie paix ne viendra pas de l'occident ou bien de l'hémisphère du nord mais de ces parties du monde où la répression des droits humains fomentent la protestation qui peut se transformer en violence.

Le Professeur Friedli expose à grands traits quelques possibilités constructives sur la promotion de la paix et la non-violence du côté des gens religieux, Elles devraient intéresser chacun qui est engagé dans l'entreprise missionnaire.)

The inauguration of a Roman Catholic Lectureship at the Selly Oak Colleges is truly a sign of spring in what has been, for too long, an ecumenical winter, a sign that in the not too distant future it will no longer be necessary to teach in our universities a theology that is distinctly Catholic and a theology that is strictly Protestant, but that Christian theology as such shall already be in her full vigour.

There is an additional reason for my being so moved this evening: Birmingham is a major centre of the movement for peace promoted within the tradition of the Selly Oak Federation. Reflecting on what I might wish to say to you this evening, I drew a great deal of inspiration from the work of this tradition of pacifism, a pacifism which is both lucid and committed.

In fact, I wish to speak to you about those ways of peace which, in my opinion, we have to follow if we wish to speak of the mission of the Church. It is those very ways of peace which J. Chr. Hoekendijk has so clearly outlined when, in the context of the World Council of Churches, he speaks of the mission of the Church as "the shalom-atisation" of every aspect of life". In this instance we have a point of convergence with the Roman Catholic tradition, which in the Second Vatican Council hoped to see the Church as a "sign of peace".

The claim by different religions that they are concerned not only in the call to peace, but also in active co-operation in the construction of a peaceful and harmonious world, is to be understood as a central theme of their message. However, this appeal for peace by the world religions - the 'pax romana', the biblical 'shalom', the Islamic 'salam', the Hindu 'Santi', or the Buddhist 'Nirvana' - has been in recent months, once again completely subverted by the dramatic outbreak of violence, violence of a religious character. We may cite as examples: the imposed mass-suicide of 918 members in the People's Temple in Jonestown, Guyana, which took place on the 19th November, 1978; the Islamic-shiite revolution under the inspiration of the Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeyni; and the recently re-inforced concern with heresy trials of the Roman Catholic authorities.

Such situations have caused peace-researchers to regard with a certain scepticism the claims of the religions concerning their promotion of peace. Further there are religious groups engaged in the promotion of peace who have submitted themselves to severe self-criticism. I cite, as an example, the acknowledgement of guilt adopted at the Third World Conference on Religion and Peace:

"We cannot deny that:-

- the practices of our religious communities are sometimes a divisive force in the world;
- too often we conform to the powers of the world, even when they do wrong, rather than confronting those powers with the word of the teachings of our religions;
- we have not done enough as servants and advocates of suffering and exploited human beings;
- we have done too little to build interreligious understanding and community among ourselves on the local level where prejudices run strong."

From this point of view, an appeal for peace within a religious setting (during the liturgy, or in the form of a sermon) can only be more than an appeal within the context of an ideological system, when the prejudices, the potential for aggression, and the abuses of authority which are to be seen in any such religion, in its doctrines, its moral demands, and its hierarchical structure, have been sought out and diminished. Such a diminution of violence and fear within a religious system is, for the World Conference of Religions 'the' pre-condition for maximizing one's possibilities for promoting peace within the context of the power-play of world politics.

Thus the supplementary contribution of the religions to the pluri-disciplinary promotion of peace, and to the practice of peace will be outlined in two phases:-

1. A self-critical phase: Factors within the religions which hinder the promotion of peace;
2. A constructive phase: Possibilities within the religions which favour the promotion of peace.

SELF-CRITICAL PHASE:

Factors within the religions which hinder the promotion of peace.

The acknowledgement of guilt by the Third World Conference on Religion and Peace quoted above, is an explicit expression of a readiness to change. However, it is necessary to carry out intensive empirical research into the different attitudes and types of behaviour mentioned in it, in order to understand the different religio-psychological and religio-sociological mechanisms at work, and to lessen their influence. For example, this would involve such factors as: the removal of prejudices (primitive, pagan, Kafir); the suppression of sociological limitations (caste-strata, compulsory celibacy); the suppression of the enemy-

image (in the presentation of other religions); or the suppression of hierarchical systems (vertically-structured forms of authority, God-image, and 'church' leadership).

1. HIGH OPTION FOR VIOLENCE AMONG CHURCH GOERS: In this context I would like to present the findings of 13 research studies into socio- and religio-psychological motivations and attitudes. These studies were carried out in the sixties and seventies in Canada, the United States and Germany. In these studies attitudes that militate against peace and attitudes that favour war are not in relationship to orthodox religious thought and belief. To this end two series of questions were juxtaposed in each instance. On the one hand, questions were asked concerning attitudes to concrete social and church situations; on the other hand, the respondents were asked to classify their commitment to an organized religion.

The questions relating to society, peace or militarism raised the following problems:-

- support for military training;
- necessity for, and construction of air-raid shelters during the Berlin crisis;
- support for atomic weapons;
- attitude towards extreme leftist groups;
- position regarding capital punishment;
- financial assistance towards a US victory in Viet Nam;
- promotion of the notion of world-citizenship;
- financial assistance for Peace Research Institutes;

The faith-involvement of the respondents was determined according to the frequency of Church-attendance, help given to missionary projects, or simply according to their self-assessment on a scale ranging from 'fundamental' to 'agnostic' and 'atheist'.

The findings of these different analyses reveal a stunning contradiction between actual practice and the Christian message of love and peace, in Christianity and in the other religions: in their attitudes Christians are more inclined to favour war than are non-Christians; more dogmatic Christians tend to opt more for punishment than do the less dogmatic; Catholics favour nuclear weapons more than do Protestants; Protestants, in their turn, favour such weapons more than do non-believers.

Among the various groups interviewed (the general population, and such specific groups as religious public officials, financial experts, business executives, and undergraduates in 37 universities) the church-goers, more than the non-church-goers, showed a stronger tendency to favour military power as the means for resolving conflicts. Those firmly committed to religious practice and beliefs were less concerned about the world-community than were those who called themselves irreligious.

2. THE ATTITUDE OF STRICT AUTHORITARIANISM: These findings present a 'clinical malady diagnosis' of the religious mentality, which can be characterised as severe (punitive), repressive (evil must be overcome), authoritative (imposition of an absolute truth without reference to history), and censorial (above all in matters concerning sexual morality). Such general behaviour marked by definite personality traits, has been interpreted and typified as an Orthodox-attitude or as severe authoritarianism by such peace-researchers as John Paul, Jérôme Laulicht and Elbert W. Russel of the Canadian Institute for Peace Research Oakville/Ontario. These religio-phenomenological obstacles to peace and a type of orthodoxy which produces violence are to be found

in the great religions and also in the more recent religious movements and cults. In this context, orthodoxy implies those forms of religiosity which, because of a dogmatically determined system, hold themselves aloof from a practical and co-operative response to the vital needs of the members of alien groups.

3. THE REASONS FOR SUCH PUNITIVE AND REPRESSIVE TENDENCIES: There is considerable agreement concerning the relation between religion and the authoritative-punitive complex. However, there is little unanimity in the explanation of the reasons for such a relation. Various reasons have been proposed: the understanding of truth; the transformation of the original inspiration into an organized church; the need for self-protection. An enquiry into this relation and its cause is rendered difficult by the fact that religion does not always promote violence and fear, but at the same time preaches compassion, protest, disenchantment with power-structure, and the destruction of alienation. Religion as such does not produce this paradoxical relation between religiosity and militarism.

It would seem, however, that the tendency to authoritarianism is based on an understanding of God as severe or judgmental.

An analysis of the content of the Koran, of a neo-Buddhist movement like Sokagakki, or of the preaching of Jesus, can show that their respective messages could easily be made to support the above-described mentality of strict orthodoxy. The orthodox Muslims, Buddhists and Christians are highly authoritative and obstinately strict (which evidently does not exclude a merciful attitude towards the sinner).

I think that it is only against a background of self-criticism and an awareness of negative factors within religions, that we can speak of the positive contribution of the religions to the search for peace.

CONSTRUCTIVE PHASE:

Factors within the religions which favour the promotion of peace.

The Science of Religions and Theology, therefore, have to propose a contribution based on a process of critical self-assessment. This they will do by means of an inter-disciplinary study made in co-operation with the other sciences engaged in research for peace, among others of International Relations, Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Social Psychology, International Law, Biology, Demography and Geography. Only then can the religions strive to do what is necessary to build a climate of trust and of commitment, in an atmosphere of calm.

This they will do so that the problems of violence, want, and fear in this village which we call world, and in each particular part of it, will be diminished. Apart from their moral encouragement towards the establishment of peace, are the religions capable of offering a technique and method, a more concrete strategy, for the promotion and realization of this project?

1. POSSIBILITIES FOR PROMOTION OF PEACE: Provided that the negative behaviour and attitudes that are only superficially tolerant of the "possessors of truth" be changed - I am convinced that the followers of religions can participate in the promotion of peace. In this regard the following undertakings at least, are required of the world religions:

a. they should exercise more effectively their influence as international pressure groups (for example, the contribution of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, a non-governmental agency of the United Nations Organisation, to the debate on disarmament, to debate on racism and other such matters);

- b. they should be more active in the diplomacy of international relations (for example, the World Federation of Buddhists, the Conference of Islamic States, the system of Roman Catholic nunciatures);
- c. they should contribute from the resources of their spiritual heritage to the destruction of fear; to the strengthening of reflective self-knowledge; to destroying the necessity of role-playing; to spreading the practice of an unconditional empathy, an open understanding between all men; to affirming all rejections of punitive and conformist social pressures; and to the promoting of death-experiences as Yoga, Zen meditation and Sufi mysticism.

This last personal and religious proposition, which alone is within our direct reach, should now be outlined more concretely. Two methodological contributions to the project of promoting peace and of lessening the behaviour complex of strict-authoritarianism-and-orthodoxy, seem to me in this context to be worth attempting:-

- a. the systems of meditation, which have become more well known as a result of comparative studies in mysticism;
- b. non-fear-provoking and non-violent strategies for resolving conflicts, both personal and social, and, further to this, strategies for reconciliation.

2. MEDITATION: The meditation process, which leads to a greater self-knowledge should be a practice at the service of the promotion of peace. Thus the interior self would be freed from behaviour-patterns which involve role-playing, which are based on a friend-enemy dichotomy, and which thus lead to the breaking up of communities. The method of meditation follows a pattern of participatory knowledge, in contrast to the rational understanding which is based on analysis, technically-distanced observation and definition. The meditation process transcends the 'we here' and 'you there' dichotomy, which is ultimately aggression-forming. It creates, by its method, a deepening and enlargement of consciousness. This, in turn, becomes a possibility for co-operation with others and for a vulnerable openness, which lead to a solidarity which is more radical than the distinctions based on psychological or social differences (character, race, social position, religious confession).

The meditation experience is not necessarily a flight into one's own interiority, an introvert regression. It can free the everyday, routine self, with all its prejudices and fear-reactions, and can lead it to a new level of solidarity with its fellow, and with God perceived in these very fellows. In this context Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker has stressed over and over again that it will be impossible to avoid war, that inequality, want and the destruction of the environment cannot be avoided as long as the "structure of a fearful self-protection on the 'I', which is guiding influence in all of us, remains to be destroyed, a structure which is based on the Friend-Enemy dichotomy".

3. NON-VIOLENCE: The methodology of non-violent strategies, both in their subversive and constructive phases, come within the ambit of this process of meditation. This can be illustrated by the examples of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Unfortunately, the techniques and strategies of Buddhist, Hindu or Christian non-violent protest cannot be outlined within the framework of this particular address. However, I would like to outline one possible contribution drawn from the spiritual and ascetical literature of the various religions, and confirmed by other scientific disciplines. I refer to the link between violence, fear and sexuality. The spiritual masters in the mystical religious traditions have, with astounding surety, pointed out the link which exists between a disordered and undisciplined sexuality, and the increase of masochistic and sadistic forms of violence. ~~Thus the experts in the domains of the Science of~~

Religion, and of Theology can, in an inter-disciplinary promotion of peace, formulate the positive relation between an integrated sexuality, otherwise known as chastity, and an empathy which shuns all possibility of violence and fear.

FUTURE PROSPECTS: No doubt you are well aware that the questions raised tonight cannot be given adequate replies. Nonetheless, it is my opinion that the Church has very real possibilities for contributing to the establishment of peace in our world. I am more than happy that Sr. Mary Hall continues to play a very significant role in this task which is common to us all, as our shared mission. Her sharing of the sufferings and joys of the peoples of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the north-east of Brazil is a guarantee that the Selly Oak Colleges will thus make its own particular contribution to the building of a world which will be more fraternal, more human and more peaceful. This task, however, will be difficult and will be fraught with risks. However, this evening demonstrates that you are prepared to meet these difficulties. I congratulate you.

Dr. Mary Hall is the first appointment to the Roman Catholic Lectureship at the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, U.K.

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MARTYRDOM IN EL SALVADOR

Jon Sobrino

(Cette semaine comme le conflit entre la junte "Christian Democrat" et les forces combinées de l'opposition se sont intensifiées, nous publions le texte entier d'une méditation sur la mort de quatre missionnaires américaines en El Salvador au commencement du mois dernier. Jon Sobrino, SJ, est le directeur du Centre de Réflexion Théologique de l'Université Catholique à San Salvador.)

This week, as the conflict between the Christian Democrat junta and the combined forces of the opposition intensifies, we publish the full text of a meditation on the death of the four American missionaries who were murdered in El Salvador at the beginning of last month. Jon Sobrino, SJ, is the director of the Centro de Reflexion Teologica at the Catholic University in San Salvador.)

In the presence of the bodies of Maura, Ita, Dorothy and Jean, we have felt what we have already felt so many times since the murder of Rutilio Grande, nearly four years ago now. The martyrs at that time were a Jesuit priest - a friend and colleague of my own and two campesinos from Aguilares. Today the martyrs are two Maryknoll sisters, an Ursuline sister, and a social worker from the diocese of Cleveland. And between the two stretches an interminable list of priests, seminarians, students, campesinos, teachers, workers, professionals and intellectuals.

Although death has become sadly familiar to the people of El Salvador, each time we come together to bid farewell to our martyrs, our witnesses to the faith,

the same feelings well up inside us. On the one hand indignation and sadness, and the prayer of the psalmist: "How long, O Lord, how long?" On the other hand decision and resolution, and the promise of the Lord: "Rejoice Jerusalem. Your salvation is close at hand."

This time, however, nothing is able to hide a new and distinct feeling. Never, since the assassination of Archbishop Romero, has there been a similar reaction, either within or outside the country, never has there been so universal an outcry, and never so strong a sense that the patience of God has now reached its limit and that these martyrs are the harbingers of the approaching liberation.

The 300 priests and religious who met at the archiepiscopal residence heard the voice of Bishop Rivera, which rang out, fresh and distinct, denouncing, exposing and imputing responsibility to the security forces and the Christian Democrat junta. Once again the truth rang out, clear and unadulterated. And with the truth came courage and the Christian determination to remain closely united with the massacred people, although for the Church it means walking once again the way of the cross.

The first Christian passover is repeating itself. The horror, the abandonment and the solitude of the cross of Christ drove his disciples to seek refuge in the upper room. But the Spirit of Jesus, stronger than death, opened the doors, and from there they went out, strengthened and full of determination to preach the resurrection and the life, to announce the good news of the kingdom of the poor.

The archiepiscopal residence has become a new upper room. There the God of life is present, he who is far stronger than death, than oppression and repression, far stronger than we are ourselves, with our own doubts and fears. There, in the presence of the four bodies, is manifest the Christian paradox. Truly, where crime and sin abounded, life and grace have superabounded.

There is no doubt that this last passover that we have celebrated has had something special about it. With this assassination the bounds of iniquity have been exceeded, the norms of evil broken. Even we in El Salvador, who have seen everything and whom no barbarity can surprise, have been taken aback. Once again we feel that they have murdered the innocent and the just, But this time, Christ has died in the person of four women, who are religious and North American, and for that reason a particular light is cast on the turpitude of the crime.

The dead Christ is four women. In the world and in the Church in which we live, men are the protagonists. We are all equal and different before God; but in the context of our history, we do not cope easily either with the equality or with the difference. These four bodies nevertheless have something to say to us about this.

Both men and women are oppressed and repressed in El Salvador: men and women have lifted up their prayer to God, that he might hear the cries wrested from them by the exploiters; men and women have committed themselves to the struggle for liberation; and in this struggle men and women have fallen.

There, in the suffering and in the hope, they find equality at the deepest level.

The four sisters united themselves to the people of El Salvador by uniting themselves to the women of El Salvador. Woman gives life to humanity, but she does so in a way that is specifically her own, through the attentiveness of her service, her limitless devotion, her effective and affective contact with the people, and her compassion, which does not rationalize the suffering of the poor. Woman is creator of the fortitude which does not abandon those who suffer, just as the four sisters did not abandon their people, in spite of the serious threats they received.

Woman is less able to defend herself physically, and this fact underlines and exposes more clearly the barbarity of their murder and the singlemindedness and gratuitousness of their devotion.

The dead Christ is four religious. Today, when so much is said about the renewal of the religious life in El Salvador and in other parts of the world, and when the charism and the vows are so much discussed, the four bodies here reveal to us the essence of what a life consecrated to God means today. Without great gestures, without lofty declarations, they proved to us how they had grasped what is fundamental to every religious charism: service.

Little by little, religious women today have been moving into the most forgotten places, where others are unable or unwilling to go; they have indeed sought out the poor in the marginalized barrios, the working class areas, and above all the campesinos. Consecration to God today signifies service of and commitment to his poor.

In their quiet way, however, they exercised the prophetic charism of the religious life, denouncing through their presence and their active involvement the complacency of other sectors of the Church, the remoteness from the Christian people of highly-placed ecclesiastics, and, above all, the sin which brings death to the people of El Salvador. For this they have suffered the fate of the prophets and have shared the lot of the people: martyrdom. And at the same time religious now have their representatives among the martyrs who die among all social groups which have opted for the poor.

The dead Christ is four North Americans. The United States are omnipresent in El Salvador. Here there are many things "made in the USA." There are businessmen and military experts; and an embassy where the fate of the Salvadorans is decided without their even being asked what it is they want. There are arms of North American manufacture, and helicopters, including those which bombard and persecute the civilian populations.

There are, in addition, however, North American Christians, priests and religious, who have brought to us what is best in the United States: faith in Jesus rather than the dollar, love for their fellow men rather than imperialist schemes, concern for justice rather than exploitation. With these four North Americans, Christ, although he came from outside, was no stranger in El Salvador, and, indeed, quickly became Salvadoran.

Through them, a bond of brotherhood was established between the Church in El Salvador and the Church in the United States, based on the Christian formula of mutual help and support, rather than on domination, blackmailing with economic aid or the creation of a state of dependence through paternalism.

El Salvador gave the four sisters new eyes with which to see the crucified body of Christ in his people and new hands to heal their wounds. The United States have given us four women who abandoned their country to give singlemindedly, to the point when they gave their own lives,

That which has united the two churches, that which is moving the different churches to build up the one Church dispersed throughout the world, is the poor and service of the poor. It is very moving to hear Peggy Healy, a Maryknoll sister and a friend of the murdered sisters, saying that the highly-placed officials sent to El Salvador by President Carter should go to investigate not simply the deaths of four North American citizens, but the genocide of 10,000 Salvadorans as well. When such an attitude as this exists the Church in El Salvador cannot but welcome Christians from her sister-church in the United States. And when this ~~attitude leads to martyrdom~~, she can only thank her from the bottom of her heart.

Maura, Ita, Dorothy and Jean are the dead Christ today. But they are also the risen Christ, who keeps alive the hope of liberation. Their murder has moved and angered the world, but to Christians this murder says something about God, because these women tell us something about God. As Christians we believe that salvation comes to us through Jesus, but this may be the moment to take seriously what theology has expressed in an excessively spiritual and academic way: that salvation comes to us also through a woman, Mary, the Virgin of the cross and of the Magnificat.

Salvation comes to us through all men and women who love the truth better than lies, who are readier to give than to receive, who regard it as the highest form of love to give one's life rather than to keep it for oneself. Here God is present. Therefore, although these four bodies fill us with grief and indignation, our last word must be: thank you. With Maura, Ita, Dorothy and Jean, God has passed through El Salvador.

Reference: THE TABLET, 17 January, 1981, Volume 235 No. 7332.

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(Footnote: In last week's mail came the following news release. It is only one of many with which I am sure our readers are constantly in contact. Ed).

CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS INFORMATION SHEET, JANUARY 27, 1981

ARRESTED: THE CARITAS DIRECTOR IN SAN SALVADOR

Several news agencies have reported on the arrest of the Caritas San Salvador Director, Carmen Gonzales Escamilla, and of two assistants. The arrest followed the search by the police of the Caritas warehouse, where finding nothing but food-stuffs and medicines, they maintained that ammunition and propaganda material destined for the fighters had been found in a Caritas truck....

Caritas Internationalis is fully aware of the current dramatic situation in Salvador which is affecting above all the defenseless and the non-violent, and consequently even the Caritas officials who, while being guided by humanitarian criteria and the search for social justice, can become innocent victims of the hate-wave flooding the country.

Caritas Internationalis firmly hopes that its field workers are released as soon as possible, and that Caritas San Salvador and all the other humanitarian organizations are permitted to continue operating freely.

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IL MISSIONARIO E L'EVANGELIZZAZIONE DELL'UOMO DI OGGI
Corso di Formazione Permanente per Missionari Reduci
18 Maggio - 13 Giugno 1981

Dal 18 maggio al 13 giugno, gli Istituti Missionari maschili e femminili di origine italiana terranno un corso di formazione permanente per missionari in vacanza. Inviare le iscrizioni a: P. Filippo Commissari, P.I.M.E., Via F. D. Guerrazzi, 11 - 00152 Roma - Tel. 06/58.97.941.

DE L'ASSISTANCE A LA LIBERATION

LES TACHES ACTUELLES DE L'EGLISE EN MILIEU AFRICAIN

Jean-Marc Ela.

(This is portion of an address given by Jean-Marc Ela to young African intellectuals on the occasion of a Pan-African meeting of the JEC (Young Christian Students) in September, 1980. The author is a distinguished African priest who shared the life of his people at simple village level. The task of the Church in Africa today, he says is to facilitate integral liberation.

Many of his reflections on the difficulties encountered in enabling a truly African Christianity to develop are being pointed out by other Africans today. The challenge is more readily recognized in Asia, home of the great world religions. Jean-Marc examines the challenge as it affects African Churches in the wake of first evangelization. Sometimes the so called "young Churches of Africa appear rather like the medieval castles that rich Americans dismantle stone by stone to reassemble on the banks of the Potomac." Are the young Churches really young, growing, adapting, absorbing, changing, incarnating the Good News to the peoples of Africa? Ed.)

I. L'EGLISE D'AFRIQUE EN QUETE DE LA PERTINENCE DE LA FOI.

Les réflexions que je propose ici se situent dans un contexte déterminé où nous devons nous interroger sur la pratique de l'Eglise et les contradictions de la société où la majorité des Africains risque d'appartenir à cette catégorie d'hommes et de femmes que Fanon appelait "les Damnés de la terre". Quelles sont les tâches de l'Eglise dans ce contexte précis?

Que peut-on en attendre à partir du moment où elle s'examine elle-même et cherche à se définir en tenant compte des grandes questions qui travaillent les nouvelles générations africaines? A quels défis doit-elle répondre si elle ne veut pas se contenter d'un visage folkloriquement africain parmi les jeunes et les cadres qui constituent le germe où se prépare l'avenir tandis que les paysans des villages subissent une série de dominations qui les enferment dans un processus de dégradation et de marginalisation croissante?

On mesure l'enjeu de ces interrogations dans une période de l'évolution de la société africaine où des milliers de jeunes, dans les grandes villes africaines, se précipitent sur la dose d'opium qui guérit de l'ennui et console du chômage par le saut "qualitatif" dans les paradis artificiels créés par les dieux d'Europe et d'Amérique. Elément constitutif d'une sous-culture de masse, un cinéma d'évasion et de profit, qui se transforme en véritable école du crime pour des jeunes candidats à la délinquance dans les amas urbains, tend à devenir un obstacle réel à l'éveil des consciences sur les problèmes de fond que pose l'Afrique des indépendances.

Dans les situations où les appareils de pouvoir oppressif étouffent toute possibilité de débat sur les problèmes graves, l'Eglise libère, incontestablement, un espace de recherche et de réflexion où il convient d'explorer les chemins qui

des sectes dans les régions où le fait chrétien semblait établi sont un défi pour les Eglises officielles. Dans cette conjoncture, ne convient-il pas d'assumer les questions de la personne qui ouvre un champ immense à ceux qui s'interrogent sur l'incarnation de l'Évangile en Afrique?

II. REPRENDRE LES QUESTIONS LAISSEES PAR LA PREMIERE EVANGELISATION.

Il semble que l'une des tâches urgentes de l'Eglise soit de réévaluer sa pratique, son attitude et son enseignement en tenant compte des questions restées sans réponse dans la première phase de l'évangélisation. L'apostolat missionnaire n'a "labouré dans l'homme africain que la surface qui (lui) paraissait labourable, laissant en friche un no man's land hérissé de touffes d'interrogations, de doutes, d'aspirations et d'insatisfactions de tous genres" (6). S'il y avait lieu de reprendre le chemin de la mission cette tâche s'impose dans plusieurs régions où il faudrait évangéliser ceux qui ont été sacramentalisés -, ce qui doit être pris au sérieux, c'est tout ce domaine de l'être africain "qui fut méconnu ou saccagé par l'évangélisation traditionnelle" (7).

On sent très bien qu'il ne suffit plus d'organiser l'action de l'Eglise autour des structures de chrétienté, dans un contexte cléricale où les énergies missionnaires s'épuisent dans les tâches rituelles. En Afrique Noire, l'Eglise catholique baptise deux fois plus de fidèles que celle des Etats-Unis. Les vieilles générations de missionnaires se plaisent à évoquer le temps où l'Esprit soufflait en tornade. Les baptêmes, le confessionnal ou les interminables tenues de palabres absorbaient alors la vie et le ministère des prêtres en Afrique. Au Rwanda, tel Père Blanc entendit en 1958, 63,500 confessions, soit, en moyenne, 210 par jour et pendant 300 jours.

Or, comme l'atteste l'institution du mariage chrétien qui s'est figé en un modèle unique, les réalités de la foi transposées telles quelles par l'Eglise latine en Afrique se heurtent dans les faits à un échec (8). Au moment où nous prenons conscience de la nécessité de vivre la foi dans la rencontre des cultures, nous éprouvons le besoin de dépasser une pastorale d'institution pour rejoindre l'homme africain dans son lieu d'existence quotidienne.

Ainsi, les préoccupations pour lesquelles les convertis vont consulter les devins ou les marabouts interpellent l'Eglise d'Afrique. Nous devons nous interroger sur la manière d'être chrétien dans ces villages ou ces quartiers où le "guérisseur" joue un rôle considérable dans la vie des populations locales.

En milieu africain, l'Eglise ne devrait-elle pas prendre Jésus au mot en son Évangile en mettant à profit le pouvoir qui lui a été donné d'imposer les mains et de guérir les malades? (Mc. 16, 18). Il semble urgent de revaloriser ce ministère dans les situations où l'Africain désemparé est en quête de paix et de sécurité. En définitive, c'est la Bible elle-même que nous devons relire à partir de la relation de l'Africain à l'invisible afin d'assumer l'univers de la maladie et de la guérison pour y faire apparaître la force de salut inhérente à l'Évangile. Et le rêve, qui préoccupe l'homme noir dans la mesure où il traduit le langage de l'au-delà par le détour de l'imaginaire, doit aussi devenir un lieu d'intervention de l'apôtre de base.

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auté du Christ (Col. 1, 15-20) en se rappelant que saint Paul ne condamne pas les puissances et les principautés, auxquelles les nouveaux convertis du monde grec accordaient encore une grande importance. Car, il s'attache surtout à préciser la position capitale du Christ de qui vient tout salut. En Afrique Noire, le monde de la Nuit ou de l'Invisible est peut-être le lieu privilégié où il nous faut entendre la Bonne Nouvelle de la Descente de Jésus aux Enfers (1 P.3, 19-20) afin d'annoncer la libération à l'homme africain menacé par le pouvoir occulte.

En un sens, la société africaine qu'il nous faut rencontrer paraît fondée sur des conceptions socio-médicales et magico-religieuses de la culture, notamment la purification, la confession publique, la vénération des ancêtres, le langage articulé des esprits, la communication entre le visible et l'invisible.

Au moment où cette société est en crise, une confrontation doit s'instaurer entre le sacramentalisme chrétien et les moyens concrets par lesquels l'Africain cherche à se concilier les puissances invisibles et à se protéger des forces occultes. Bref, la quête d'un bonheur concret à l'ombre des Ancêtres et à la lumière de l'Evangile doit devenir un souci de l'Eglise en milieu africain. A partir d'une telle recherche, une appropriation de la foi essentielle est possible.

Les communautés chrétiennes d'Afrique doivent désormais avoir le courage d'abandonner le confort d'une praxis missionnaire qui s'organise en fonction des lieux de culte pour assumer les questions concrètes de la personne en leur radicalité. Car, c'est d'un homme total qu'il s'agit, lorsqu'une existence tout entière se réaménage à partir de ce qui lui donne sens, au sein d'une culture globale déterminée. Au bout du compte, se pose à l'Eglise, quotidiennement, la question de la pertinence de la foi au sein d'un vaste réseau de symboles originels créés par l'univers propre à l'Africain.

L'homme que nous accueillons dans l'Eglise d'Afrique, c'est une totalité symbolique qui le constitue, dans son monde de vie et de pensée, avec toutes les déterminations et les réalités institutionnelles où se forme et se déploie sa personnalité de base, dans un enchevêtrement de signes et de symboles qui nous donnent à réfléchir pour dégager le surplus de sens du mystère chrétien.

III. LE TEMPS DE LA RUPTURE.

Dans la mesure où aucune tradition ecclésiale n'a épuisé jusqu'ici le fonds d'expressivité de la Révélation divine, il nous faut chercher à dire Dieu en Jésus-Christ avec les mots de notre terre et de notre culture. Il s'agit aujourd'hui de donner à la Parole de Dieu une écriture africaine en faisant jaillir de la vie des communautés d'Evangile, patiemment, un langage de la foi qui soit signifiant pour l'Africain d'aujourd'hui.

Il n'est pas vrai que la lecture de l'Evangile soit terminée et que notre unique tâche dans l'Eglise soit de répéter, comme des perroquets qu'on capture dans nos forêts vierges, ce que les autres ont découvert, pensé et organisé. Nous devons apprendre à nous passer de la médiation des formes étrangères si nous ne voulons pas vivre notre relation à l'Evangile avec une personnalité d'emprunt. Aujourd'hui, l'Occident doute de lui-même. Et il découvre qu'il n'est plus qu'un accident: pour surmonter ses propre contradictions, il lui faut avoir l'humilité de boire à d'autres sources. Face à la déraison du mimétisme dénoncé par Tévoedjré, il nous faut radicaliser le doute de l'Occident sur lui-même. Le temps de la création où nous sommes entrés met en cause les systèmes prétablis qui veulent s'imposer au christianisme en Afrique.

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réalité socio-historique dans laquelle nous sommes engagés. A la reprise des formules toutes faites et des institutions dogmatisées, préférons le risque d'être nous-mêmes, l'aventure d'une parole située dans le contexte précis où nous cherchons à tracer des chemins nouveaux.

Ce qu'on entend dans les Eglises locales d'Afrique rappelle encore trop souvent l'écho d'un vieux monde et le reflet d'une vie étrangère. Or un christianisme mimétique est impuissant à résoudre nos problèmes parce qu'il est coupé de nos réalités propres.

Si le christianisme était cette répétition des doctrines déjà élaborées, objectivées et institutionnalisées, il contribuerait à réduire l'Africain en pure passivité réceptive, incapable de rien examiner ou de rien inventer par lui-même. Le Ressuscité ouvre à la foi le champ inépuisable des possibles. C'est pourquoi nous sommes en quête d'une parole propre qui fasse entendre les voix d'Afrique dans la vie de l'Eglise.

Dans cette perspective, il ne faut rien dire, rien penser et rien faire dans l'Eglise qui ne parte de la réalité quotidienne, de la tradition vivante des peuples africains, des tâches concrètes des villages et des quartiers.

Ce qui doit aujourd'hui mobiliser l'Eglise d'Afrique, par la mise en communication et la rencontre des différences, c'est une tâche historique, la tâche de l'universel à refaire, avec le savoir de notre temps, les instruments et les outils de notre milieu. Tâche grandiose d'hommes et de femmes d'Afrique, astreints à des commencements nouveaux, appelés à vivre la foi comme un moment de la création en marche: c'est la tâche qui nous incombe d'éprouver le sens du christianisme, d'en libérer la catholicité telle qu'elle se déploie dans l'incessante genèse de l'homme et du monde soulevé par le dynamisme de l'Esprit.

Voici que s'ouvre aux communautés chrétiennes d'Afrique le temps où elles retrouvent leur mémoire vive, leur initiative et leur imagination pour "réinventer l'Eglise", dans une confrontation avec elles-mêmes, à travers le passé et le présent, dans l'indétermination de l'avenir qui nous provoque.

Cela suppose sur le terrain, un ensemble de recherche et d'expérience ou, dans le domaine de la transmission de la foi et de la pédagogie religieuse, une reprise en considération des procédés du style oral, une réactivation de la palabre africaine dans l'annonce de l'Evangile en Afrique. La traduction de la Parole de Dieu dans les langues et les cultures africaines aboutit à un jeu d'échange et de réciprocité entre le message chrétien et les traditions culturelles sans écriture. Il existe tout un réservoir de mots, d'images et de symboles, de catégories concrètes susceptibles de faire éclater le vocabulaire chrétien à partir de la rencontre entre l'Eglise et la société africaine. Par l'usage catéchétique et liturgique d'un lexique venu d'Afrique, se prépare la naissance d'un langage théologique enraciné dans les cultures du terroir.

C'est aussi toute la sacramentalité du mystère chrétien, avec son symbolisme fondamental, qui devrait être reprise dans son enracinement culturel (9). Dès lors, aucune célébration de la liturgie et des sacrements ne peut s'enrichir des éléments du milieu africain sans qu'on mette fin au temps des prescriptions minutieuses du Droit Canon. En Afrique Noire, l'initiation baptismale et le rituel du mariage doivent affronter les coutumes initiatiques et les traditions matrimoniales de chaque groupe humain. On ne peut pas considérer les éléments fondamentaux du culte chrétien comme des produits fabriqués qu'on exporte dans le monde, à travers des formules invariables et uniformes. Une Eglise en quête de

(9) Voir notre étude: "Symbolique africaine et mystère chrétien", in Les Quatre Fleuves, no. 10, 1979.

son statut d'adulte ne saurait se contenter de consommer des traditions culturelles et liturgiques propres à un modèle ecclésial déterminé.

Si l'Eglise parle le langage de la communion, elle doit faire honneur aux langues en lesquelles les merveilles de Dieu n'ont pas encore été proclamées. Dans cette perspective, une question troublante se pose: "l'enracinement du cultuel et du culturel ne va-t-il pas jusqu'à l'utilisation des fruits de la terre et du travail des hommes? Jusqu'où l'utilisation des produits du blé et de la vigne par le Christ Jésus est-elle universellement normative jusqu'à la fin des temps," se demande Mgr SANON (10).

Ces questions ne viennent pas des têtes brûlées mais des pasteurs d'âmes qui voient dans l'Eglise, comme le rappelle l'évêque de Bobo-Dioulasso, en Haute-Volta, le milieu le plus propice pour exprimer et traduire la richesse de la rencontre entre l'universalisme chrétien et les particularités culturelles (11).

Autres sont les peuples et leurs langues. Cette reconnaissance de la "diversité" nous paraît fondamentale aujourd'hui. Que dit l'Esprit aux églises d'Afrique? Ne faudrait-il pas davantage écouter cette parole pour dire la même foi dans les formes et les signes différents? Si Dieu rencontre tout homme dans la singularité de sa condition et de sa culture, n'y a-t-il pas lieu de suivre la recommandation de saint Paul demandant que "chacun demeure dans la condition où la Parole de Dieu l'a trouvé" (1 Cor. 7, 24). Ces questions convergent vers ce "christianisme africain" dont Paul VI, lors de son voyage à Kampala avait fait le recherche des Eglises d'Afrique.

A son tour, c'est Jean-Paul II qui l'affirme: "L'Africanisation est votre tâche," disait-il aux Evêques du Zaïre. Ce projet "recouvre, dit le saint-Père, des domaines non encore assez explorés comme le langage pour présenter le message chrétien d'une façon qui atteigne l'esprit et le coeur des Zaïrois, la catéchèse, la réflexion théologique, la liturgie, l'art sacré, les formes communautaires de vie chrétienne". Ce vaste processus doit faire du "Christ lui-même un Africain dans les membres de son corps", disait le Pape au Kenya. On doit se réjouir de l'intérêt que Rome accorde à une recherche qui semble avoir mobilisé jusqu'ici les forces vives de l'Eglise d'Afrique.

IV. LES PIEGES DE L'AFRICANISATION.

Peut-être doit-on marquer les pièges de l'africanisation qui fait tant de bruits dans nos Eglises. "Puisque ce sujet préoccupe les chrétiens, les pasteurs et les théologiens d'Afrique, il faut bien les orienter dans ce domaine et qu'ils ne s'occupent pas des questions qui risquent de perturber l'ordre et l'équilibre de la vie sociale dans les nouveaux Etats d'Afrique." Tout se passe comme s'il n'y avait plus autre chose à faire qu'à retrouver nos langues et nos rythmes notre art et nos symboles. Les communautés n'auraient plus d'autres préoccupations que d'assumer ce qu'il y a de beau et de bon, de juste et de valable dans nos rites, nos moeurs et nos institutions. Les générations de la Négritude échappent difficilement à une problématique de la foi qui réduit le champ de la recherche à une "certaine approche du mystère chrétien à partir de ce que sont les Africains avec leurs réactions et leurs mentalités propres" (12).

(10) A. T. SANON, "Message universel dans la pluralité culturelle", in Concilium, no. 155, 1980, p. 110.

(11) Id. 113-114.

(12) I. De SOUZA, dans Peuple du monde, 91, 1976, p. 41-43.

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