
MAKING THE GOOD NEWS RELEVANT

Gerald Griffin, ssc.

(Cet article concerne une approche de la catéchèse des adultes entreprise par une équipe composée de deux Pères de Saint Colomban et de deux Japonais. Bien que l'auteur prétende qu'il n'y a rien de nouveau ou d'extraordinaire dans ce cours, j'eus l'impression, en parlant avec lui, qu'il était "unique" en bien des points. En un temps où beaucoup de missionnaires s'interrogent sur la qualité de leur catéchèse, et la profondeur de la conversion ou de la profession de foi, que leurs cours devraient provoquer, je pense que l'accent mis par Gerald Griffin et ses compagnons, sur les résultats de la psychologie du comportement humain et les techniques de la dynamique de groupe constitue vraiment une percée. Ce qu'il nous expose dans cet article, est important pour l'approche catéchétique dans les six continents.)

(This article refers to an adult catechetical approach developed by a team of two Columbans and two Japanese. While the writer claims there is nothing new or extraordinary about the course I formed the impression when speaking with him about it, that it was unique in many ways. At a time when missionaries are questioning the quality of their catechetical courses and the depth of the "conversions", or professions of faith, to which these courses are designed to lead, I believe that the emphasis given by Gerald Griffin and his companions to the findings of psychology concerning human behavior and the techniques of group dynamics is indeed a breakthrough. What he has to say here has relevance for catechetical approaches in the six continents. Ed).

How to make the "Good News" relevant to people today, how to present it in a way that would meet people's needs--that was the problem that led a group of us of the Columban Pastoral Committee to draw up a new catechetical course as an attempt at a fresh approach to the teaching of catechetics to adults.

There were four of us on the committee: two Columbans, Sean Ryle and myself, and two members of the Secular Institute of the Catechists of Our Lady, Miss Yoshinaga and Miss Yoshida. Miss Yoshida and I worked on the writing of the text, while Sean and Miss Yoshinaga worked at the printing and helped with organizing workshops for priests, sisters and catechists who came to learn about the new method of teaching. While Miss Yoshida and I were drawing up the text, before finalizing it she used it at twice-weekly sessions with two different groups in two different churches to test its suitability.

Application to living situations: The Japanese are pragmatic. For them the value of an idea depends on whether or not it can be tested in real life. The emphasis of the new religions, which have won millions of enthusiastic adherents in only a few decades since World War II, is on this world--the material and the immediate are more important than the spiritual and eternal. We Christians, on the other hand, in presenting the message of the Gospel, have tended to err in the opposite direction and over-emphasized the spiritual and eternal, as if life in this world, secular life, were unimportant or only very secondary. Such a message does not appeal to the ordinary Japanese. As the chief of some primitive tribe replied when asked about the work that certain Christian missionaries were doing among his people: "The missionaries are good people and kind, but they are scratching where it doesn't itch."

The new method: We drew up a catechetics course that gets away from the original approach in that it tries to incorporate the findings of psychology concerning human maturity and techniques of group dynamics, to help people to come to a certain degree of self-knowledge and self-acceptance in order that they may be better able to encounter Christ and be prepared to accept the message of salvation.

For many years previous to drawing up this text, I had been dissatisfied as pastor trying to teach inquirers who came to the church wanting to learn about Christianity. The catechisms that were available did not seem to meet the needs of these people. They needed to be made to feel that Christianity was relevant to their daily lives, that God and Christ are concerned with whatever is important to them--their problems, hopes, frustrations, hurts; their need to find meaning in life; to be able to relate satisfactorily to other people, and so on.

PRE-CATECHESIS

I felt that before they could accept Christ and feel accepted by Him as they are, they had first to experience acceptance by others on the human level. I had learned from my training in counselling and from experience of teaching, that many people, especially among the Japanese, cannot relate satisfactorily to others because they have not learned to accept themselves. And so they make themselves--and others around them--wretched through self-rejection and self-hate. So, catechesis needs to begin at this level and not begin immediately with theology.

To try to get people to experience at the human level that they have value and are appreciated by others, we worked out the first stage of the new course, which we call pre-Evangelization. This stage consists of seventeen weekly two-hour sessions. The first half of each session consists of an exercise which involves the group in personal interaction and the latter half is taken up with a talk.

Self-image: acceptance: The program is meant to be used with small groups of between 8 and 10. For the exercises we get the members to divide into smaller groups to discuss a topic that we propose to them. Examples of such topics are: "Who Am I?", "Feelings"; "Alienation"; "Self-hate"; "Maturity"; "The Art of Listening". There are guidelines in our text-book (which is for use by teachers only) as to what exercises to do and how to do them.

The exercises are meant to stimulate the members of the group to explore their feelings and the self-image out of which they operate; to help them to see themselves in a more positive light through mutual, constructive feedback; to know themselves better; to communicate with others at a deeper level; to experience acceptance by the group, and so on.

At first most participants are shy and reluctant to talk, but as the braver ones start the ball rolling, gradually the members develop a feeling of trust in one another and others begin to speak up and tell things about themselves that they had never been able to tell anyone before. They say that they experience a feeling of great relief after unburdening themselves like this. Listening to the sharing of other people also helps each person to realize that he or she is not the only one struggling with personal problems of various kinds and this, too, is comforting. Doing the exercise beforehand also makes the members more attuned to listen to the talk that follows and prepares them to get more out of it.

Group-sharing: The exercises in group-sharing are, perhaps, the chief innovation of this course. To help us to improve the course, we ask members of groups for their impressions after they have completed all or part of the course. Sometimes we have asked the members of a whole group each to write their impressions. We have received lots of very favourable comments, from participants and from priests, sisters and lay persons who have been teaching the course. The following are some typical comments from several inquirers after they had done the first, four months, stage:

- (1) *"The contents of this course are so unique and the exercises so full of thrills that I experienced in it an atmosphere that I had never experienced before. What to me is a great joy is the fact that I have come to accept myself and because of that have begun to try to understand others as well. I think it is a pity that other members of the Church can't take part in this course, too".*
- (2) *"The session in the first stage which made the most powerful impression on me was the one about self-acceptance. I felt as if a great, vexatious load, which had been on my mind all the time, had suddenly, and with a loud noise, disintegrated and in its place a refreshing breeze had blown right through my body. Being able to take this course has been for me a great blessing. But the greatest joy of all was that my eyes were opened to the Scriptures. The words of Christ, 'love your neighbour as yourself', really came home to me for the first time."*
- (3) *"I have never before been so attracted by a course as I have by this one. I cannot even begin to express it in words, but no matter what happens the day the course is on I wouldn't miss it for anything. Lately I am more at ease with myself and I no longer run myself down as I used to do. I am better able to give my family my full attention also. Isn't it a wonderful thing to know yourself?"*

- (4) A 28-year-old housewife, Mrs. Kato, wife of a doctor wrote: "I had joined a religion class for kindergarten mothers but it all seemed so remote and intellectual. I understood what was said, but none of it seemed to enter my heart; I felt nothing. Then I learned that a new and different kind of course was starting and I decided to change to that. At first I was overawed at being among such a large group and felt very timid about talking in the group, but the leader, Miss Yoshida, told me that there was no pressure on anyone to talk and that we could each go at our own pace. That reassured me and I soon found myself sharing with the members in the small groups when we divided up. I felt no strain and I was delighted with myself. I was surprised, also, at the results of having people listen to me. I was able to get rid of a lot of stress".

EVANGELIZATION

The second stage of the course, another 4 months or so of two-hour weekly sessions, is called Evangelization. This has as its theme encounter with Christ. The aim of this stage is to introduce the inquirer to the person of Christ. We try to show from Scripture how attractive the personality of Jesus is, how He loves and accepts people as they are, especially people rejected by society. In this stage exercises are used at each session to deepen the experience of acceptance and positive regard which has been initiated during the first stage and also to prepare the minds and hearts of the members of the group for the message of the talk which follows. At the end of this stage, normally the official induction of the inquirers as catechumens takes place during the Sunday Mass.

"Before people can accept Christ and feel accepted by Him as they are, they have first to experience acceptance by others on the human level...many people cannot relate satisfactorily to others because they have not learned to accept themselves...catechesis needs to begin at this level and not immediately with theology."

CATECHESIS

The third stage, a final four months or so of weekly sessions, also with exercises at each session, is called Catechesis proper. The theme of this stage is Encounter with the Community. Here the catechumen is instructed in and initiated into the Christian life, the liturgy, prayer, the service of others (diaconia). The teaching of the Church is given, but always in a way that is Christ-centered and based on the Scriptures. A textbook, a catechism, which our team produced, is used for the first time. Under the old system, the catechism was taught from the beginning, without any previous preparation of the inquirer's heart and mind.

The changes that have been brought about in the lives of some of the participants who have persevered to the end and been baptized have been quite remarkable, surprising these persons themselves and their families, their teachers and their friends. One outstanding example is 77-year-old Mrs. Yamashita. When she started the course she was depressed and feeling tired of life. Every day when she woke up she hoped it would be her last so that she could go and be with her daughter who had died. Her two married daughters didn't like visiting her because she had no time for them and was fussy and demanding. She looked hard and crabbed .

She said she found the exercises difficult and unpleasant for her at first and after each session she would tell herself that she wouldn't come again. But she did. In the beginning she would say her eyes were bad and she could not see the blackboard; but as time went on and she began to mellow and to find the sessions interesting and helpful, her eyesight, too, improved remarkably. She changed so much that people came to like to associate with her and she became the matriarch of the group. Her teacher, Miss Yoshida, remarked, "You have changed from a crab-apple to an apricot".

Mrs. Yamashita told me recently that her family like to visit her now. She has found meaning in life again. She does not think now of wanting to die but thinks about how she can be of use to other people. She has become a sort of unofficial counsellor for other old people, who come to her with their troubles. Before she used to disdain attending meetings of old people, but now she likes to go and contribute something positive to them. She says she is plenty busy every day. I am impressed by her evident deep faith.

A young student--let's call him Hiroshi--who had tried three times to get into a university and failed, joined the group and went right on to the end. He was baptized last Easter and wrote a letter thanking the catechist. In it he mentioned how he had been coming to the church for three years before he joined the course, and had sampled several other catechism classes, but had never felt a desire to be baptized. He said that getting to know and accept himself in the first stage of the course was what he had been looking for all along and that had helped him to go all the way.

"Gradually the members of the groups develop a feeling of trust in one another and begin to speak up and tell things about themselves that they had never been able to tell anyone before. They say that they experience a feeling of great relief after unburdening themselves like this."

MULTIPLIER EFFECT

Eager to teach others: An increasing number of those who have done the course are now willing and even eager to teach it to others. This has led us to start a separate course of training for prospective teachers. We began last year (1980). The course runs from September to the following July, once a week for two hours, in Fujisawa. This year there are almost 50 people taking it. Last year about 40 did it. In this year's program there are 7 priests, 17 sisters and 26 lay people, mostly housewives.

Not everyone who does the training course will become a teacher afterwards, but already in this Fujisawa parish alone there are at least 12 lay people who are teaching our course to small groups. We feel that the time has come to train lay people to be able to take small groups and teach them right through to baptism with a minimum of backing from the local priest. Last year there were around 100 adult baptisms in Fujisawa parish and a good percentage of those converts were taught with our new course by lay people.

If it seems surprising that so many lay people are now able and willing to teach others, there are two reasons which largely explain it. First, the training program itself gives prospective teachers an updating in modern catechetics and explains the background of the course they will be teaching. Secondly, the textbook that we give them is sufficiently detailed to provide the teacher with enough material to run a class each week. Of course, the teacher needs to put time into preparing for each session, but the training program is meant to give teachers the confidence to be able to make this preparation and then to teach a class.

We decided against advertising the courses, presuming that if people found them helpful they would tell others about them. It seems they are doing this, as we are now receiving many requests from different parts of Japan asking us to make the text of the course available for inquirers and or to give our course of training for prospective teachers. So far we have not been able to give the full nine-months' training course anywhere else other than in Fujisawa where we are based. We have given a number of three or four-day seminars in various places, but these are not enough to give the trainees a satisfactory grounding in catechetics as well as in self-knowledge and self-acceptance.

The textbook, too, is still only in mimeograph form, in Kanji Japanese and not in English or Romaji Japanese. We expect to edit the Japanese text later on in the light of the feedback we have received and are still receiving from persons who are using it.

Fr. Noel Daly, Vice-Director in Korea, heard about the course during one of his visits to Japan and asked for a set of the texts to take back with him. He had them translated into Korean and then asked me to go over to Korea and give workshops on the course, which I agreed to do. I am aware that our situation in Japan is somewhat different from that in Korea, so it will be up to the priests there to adapt what I say and also the contents of the texts; but I think the general method is worth trying out in Korea and, perhaps, with suitable adaptations, in other Regions too.

I may have given the impression that a new, revolutionary approach to catechetics has made its appearance. On the contrary, there is nothing really extraordinary about this course. Nevertheless, the gratifying results we have seen to date seem to indicate that it is meeting a felt need of inquirers, catechumens and teachers. It is a more dynamic approach than the old method and that is one reason why it appeals to all kinds of people of various ages. It is only one attempt to present the Gospel message in a way that relates to the whole person. Having experienced acceptance on the human level, the inquirer or catechumen is then prepared to experience it on the divine level, to believe and feel that Christ accepts him unconditionally. This, in short, is the "Good News".

Reference: COLUMBAN INTERCOM, June 1981 - Vol. 3 No. 5.

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NICARAGUA

CHURCH - STATE: 1979-1981

A useful bibliography dealing with the growing crisis in Nicaragua has been published by the Centre Lebret. The bibliography extends to 83 documents and is arranged chronologically. It is available at 9 rue Guénégaud, 75006, Paris.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF INTERCULTURAL FORMATION

Ivan Illich

(Le développement d'une spiritualité missionnaire pour aujourd'hui était parmi les premières priorités définies par le séminaire de SEDOS sur la Mission d'aujourd'hui. Ivan Illich, en examinant la philosophie de la Formation Interculturelle, indique certains traits caractéristiques de cette nouvelle spiritualité, et suggère la pauvreté missionnaire comme fondamentale.)

(Developing a missionary spirituality for today was high on the list of "priorities" arising from the SEDOS Seminar on Mission today. Ivan Illich, examining the philosophy of Intercultural Formation, indicates some characteristics of that new spirituality and suggests that "missionary poverty" is the basic one. Ed).

The formation of a missionary will be centered on the development of a capacity to leave his home at least spiritually and to talk to strangers. It is this he has to learn at a course aimed at missionary formation. Our purpose here will be to analyze the way in which all spiritual, intellectual and practical training of the missionary has to be organized around the development of the beatitude which makes the transition from a familiar to a foreign way of life easy and practical: and that is spiritual poverty in imitation of a special aspect of the Incarnation.

THE MODEL OF THE MISSIONER

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God: the perfect communication of God eternally consubstantial with himself. To communicate Himself perfectly to man, God had to assume a nature which was not His, without ceasing to be what He was. Under this light the Incarnation is the infinite prototype of missionary activity, the communication of the Gospel to those who are "other" through Him who entered a world by nature not His own. Just as the Word, without ceasing to be what He is, became man, Jew, Roman subject, member of a culture at a given moment in history, so any missionary, without ever ceasing to be what he is, enters and becomes part of a "foreign" culture as it is at the present moment in a given place. The missionary, then, is he who leaves his own to bring the Gospel to those who are not his own, thus becoming one of them while at the same time continuing to remain what he is. Only great love can motivate a man to do this, and deep knowledge is required to communicate.

To make his charity and knowledge of the faith bring fruit among the souls to whom he is sent, that is, to make intercultural communication of the faith possible, the missionary must acquire special skills and special attitudes. To develop this (them) is the specific purpose of missionary training. The urgency of the need for missionaries, the limited supply of persons willing to do this, and the rapidly changing pattern of culture, makes it ever more necessary to attempt a planned and intelligent formation

in those skills and attitudes which the missionary requires for his apostolate. An intensive training program can accelerate the process of cultural adaptation which in former times often was left exclusively to casual osmosis in the mission field itself. Intensive formation can mean an economy in manpower by shortening the time to make a man fully effective.

THE TECHNIQUES OF THE MISSIONER

Very often the missionary has to learn a new language, always a new lingo. Modern linguistics have greatly shortened the time this takes. The missionary must also learn to understand hitherto unknown social, economic and geophysical forces. This is often easy on the surface but it is difficult for the missionary to accept the consequences these forces will have on his own life: the weather might frustrate him with tiredness; his social position put him into a goldfish bowl, and poverty force him to unaccustomed discomfort.

Most important of all, the missionary has to face a new culture. He has to learn to distinguish between that which is morally good everywhere and that which is socially acceptable to a particular ethnic group. He will have to know which of his habits among "his new people" are socially unacceptable, though they may be morally good and he may be used to them; and he might have to become willing to accept cultural taboos of his own home as every-day patterns of his new surroundings.

This emotional and intellectual willingness to accept a new culture which does not come "natural" to anybody, can be greatly enhanced by a theoretical understanding of culture and a guided research of a local milieu.

However, the learning of a language, the acceptance in toto of a special "human climate," and especially the willingness to become part of a new culture present much more than purely intellectual problems for the missionary. For him language, techniques and culture are not academic ends but first of all means to a practical purpose: communication. And to be more precise: communication of the Gospel. The missionary becomes part of his new surroundings in order to become able to speak, not just to survive. He is the man who is willing to witness with his life, to a foreign people, the relativity of human convictions in front of the unique and absolute meaning of the Revelation. He often is the man through whom the Incarnation of the Word becomes real in cultures other than that of the ancient Jews. (Is it for that reason that we have missionaries to all nations but He has ever reserved for Himself the mission to the Jews?)

MISSIONER, GOSPEL AND CULTURE

Sometimes the "missioner" lives among people who to him are foreigners but who have received the Gospel before through priests from one culture and for a historical accident now must receive their priest coming from another. This is the case for instance in many parts of Latin America. In such situations the word "missioner" assumes a very special meaning. The priest from abroad remains "missioner" in the sense that he communicates the Gospel to those who are not of his own. The people among whom he lives

might have received and absorbed the faith centuries before any of the missionary's ancestors entered the Church or the Church had any influence on the culture of the missionary's home. In such a situation of first evangelization many of the traits of the culture the missionary finds to be different from his own deserve respect not only because they are an intimate property of a people but also because they were developed under the influence of the Catholic Church.

The full realization of such cultural relativity, especially in matters which are intimately connected with the unchangeable structure of the Church, requires great detachment. We all love to give absolute value to the things we have learned to love. We must, because to love the immediate is human and therefore necessary. But we usually forget to ask ourselves if these values we treasure are absolute in relation to everybody else as well as to ourselves. The man, therefore, who is willing to be "sent" away from home as a "missionary" will have to subject his values to a careful scrutiny to determine their "catholicity." Just as he has to become indifferent to possessions and physical comfort; just as he has to become indifferent to being or not being with his family and his people, so he has to become indifferent to the cultural values of his home. This means that he has to become very poor in a deep sense.

MISSIONARY POVERTY

For what else is spiritual poverty but indifference, willingness to be without what we like? Just as spiritual poverty implies not the absence of likes, but freedom from them; so the attitude of the missionary carries him not to the denial of his background but to communication with that of another, and this is a difficult goal to achieve. It is difficult to become indifferent - detached - from all exterior comforts. It is even more difficult to become indifferent to intimate gifts such as physical conditions supporting a healthy life, or the presence of those we love, or our reputation, or our success. It is much more difficult again to become detached from convictions deeply rooted in us since childhood about what is and is not done. Yet it is this last detachment which the missionary will have to achieve if he wants to be truly an instrument of the Incarnation rather than an agent of his own culture. No missionary has the right to insist, in the name of the Gospel, on acceptance of his own human background, and thus to make Baptism or full Church membership dependent on a degree of spiritual poverty in the convert which he himself is not willing to practice.

The realization of the necessity of this deep poverty in him who stands at the frontier of the Church as incarnate in a culture - a culture which has not yet fully accepted the Church (or perhaps fallen away from her) - is equally important for the priest abroad, Canadian in Haiti or American in Peru, as for the priest from the United States Eastern seaboard, who belongs to a Catholic sub-culture, when presenting the Church to the members of a traditionally Protestant group. What else, in fact, is the progress of Church history but a continuous meeting of the Church, as it has already become a reality in a culture, with a new world which now becomes Christian, or now returns to Christ? The "new world" contributes to the body of the Church a new human richness and accepts for itself not only the faith but a participation in purely human values of centuries-old tradition. This meeting is accomplished through the missionary.

There are special cases, and we think here again of Latin America, where through their return to Catholic practice under the influence of the "missioner" a people whose culture had been influenced for centuries by the Church can make contributions of traditional Catholic life to the culture of the missionary's home, just as the missionary among the Protestants can be an agent of transmission to the Church in his own home of Christian values developed outside the Church.

Growth in spiritual poverty must continue during the whole life of a missioner, but its first conscious development is of decisive importance and should be at the center of specialized missionary training.

The development of a missionary spirit will have to start from an analysis of the concept of spiritual poverty, or detachment. Man can become detached from visible things which he can use with his body. Man can go further and become detached from the respect, the affection and opportunities for self expression his fellowmen can give him. The missioner must go further into an area of detachment from himself which we suggest calling "missionary poverty," an intimate mystical imitation of Christ in His Incarnation.

From its organization around the acquisition of this special aspect of the beatitude of poverty, corresponding to the task of the missioner, every attempt at missionary formation will receive unity and deep meaning. Intellectual formation in the social sciences, or linguistic studies for the missioner, must be seen as an occasion and even as a means for the development of a specific form of spiritual detachment and freedom for contemplative love corresponding to his very personal vocation.

A curriculum of special courses given to the "missioner-to-be" thus can become a potent instrument for the achievement of a deeply realized catholicity in imitation of the Word - who by becoming son of a carpenter in Galilee became MAN.

(Addressed to men missioners, priests perhaps, Ivan Illich's suggestions apply equally to all missioners, men and women alike. Ed).

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Théologie Missionnaire - Section V. Dynamisme Missionnaire du Peuple de Dieu. André Seumois, OMI, Rome 1981; Lit. 4,000.

"Le but de cette étude est un renouvellement du dynamisme missionnaire de l'Eglise grâce à une réflexion théologique que nous espérons apte à offrir des modèles d'inspiration pour un regroupement des forces et un renouveau d'ardeur au service de cette "fonction de l'Eglise la plus importante et la plus sainte".

(Extrait de l'introduction).

IS SMALL BEAUTIFUL?
BUDDHISM AND DEVELOPMENT

(A review of an article by Sulak Sivaraksa in Gandhi Marg.)

An increasing number of Buddhist monks are becoming involved in grass-roots community development projects, but, as the author points out, the whole concept of "development" as understood in the West has ambiguities for Buddhists. The Sanskrit equivalent of the word "development" can also mean "confusion".

For many Buddhists, the emphasis in Western development models on "growth" at the expense of qualitative development, is a distortion of priorities. The author points out that economic development, based on increasing outputs can generate greed and bad relationships; and this is in contradiction to the four Buddhist principles of Netta (loving kindness), Karuna (compassion) Nudita (sympathetic joy) and Upekka (a balanced and neutral temperament).

The Buddhist development worker must have developed these qualities within himself before undertaking community development within a village. By sharing his personal "awakening" with the village, a new awakening and sensitivity can be created which will resist the materialism of the worst forms of economic development. The author remarks that the followers of Jesus Christ have become increasingly separated from his essential message, by the demands of capitalism and that the same process can now be observed in Buddhist societies. As an example the article states that the élites in Thailand have already lost a lot of confidence in the country's Buddhist heritage. However, there is a chance that Sri Lanka and Burma will continue to develop local patterns of development which are in harmony with Buddhist ideals.

Yet the author remains realistic that moves towards Buddhist socialism are not easily accomplished; however, for Buddhist communities this should, nevertheless, remain a goal. Sulak Sivaraksa is currently the coordinator of ACFOD, an NGO specialising in rural development (address: ACFOD, P.O. Box 2930, Bangkok, Thailand).

Gandhi Marg is the monthly magazine of the Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi, a voluntary institution dedicated to promoting discussion on Gandhian and other alternative patterns of development.

Reference: DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION, issue 81/3.

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LE 'NOMBRIIL DU MONDE' ORIENTAL

Michel Legrain, cssp.

(-lors d'un voyage de l'Institut d'Etudes Sociales de l'Institut Catholique de Paris, du 2 au 21 avril 1981. 13 pretres sur 23 personnes étaient du groupe.)

'FACE AUX DÉPLACEMENTS ÉCCLESIAUX CONTEMPORAINS'

"Une Eglise chinoise totalement gérée par les Chinois: cette idée, déjà en vogue au début du siècle, s'est trouvée réactivée depuis 1957, à la suite de l'expulsion de tous les missionnaires et de l'emprisonnement d'une large portion des prêtres et évêques autochtones. Nationale, cette nouvelle Eglise affiche une triple autonomie: autogestion, autofinancement, autoexpression et autopropagation de la foi. L'Eglise des trois autonomies n'est pas xénophobe, nous dit-on officiellement partout avec un bon sourire. Elle tisse volontiers des liens avec les autres Eglises sous la condition du respect réciproque.. Mais, lorsqu'au nom de la réciprocité des échanges, j'avance l'idée d'une bourse pour que l'un ou l'autre étudiant vienne poursuivre ses études religieuses à l'Institut Catholique de Paris, on décline aimablement mon offre, les temps n'étant pas encore là, paraît-il.

A Pékin, deux églises catholiques sont ouvertes et gérées par des prêtres patriotiques. La messe du dimanche 5 avril m'a replongé dans ma toute petite enfance: tandis que le prêtre célèbre en latin dans le lointain, la foule chante des litanies et égrène le chapelet... La ferveur de ces fidèles de tous âges est poignante. Mais à la place d'un observateur communiste comme il en existe certainement dans cette assemblée, je ferais un rapport confiant: en l'absence de toute formation ou endoctrinement, de telles pratiques s'avèrent vraiment peu dangereuses pour l'avenir athée du pays.

De mon côté, cette célébration ravive ma conscience et ma gratitude pour tout ce que les périodes pré-conciliaire, conciliaire et post-conciliaire ont apporté à l'Eglise même si de tels courants de fond charient le meilleur et le pire; vues d'une butte témoin qui s'est voulue immobile face aux déplacements ecclésiiaux contemporains, ces trente dernières années apparaissent largement positives pour l'ensemble de la vie chrétienne.

"Les camarades des hautes sphères du Bureau des affaires religieuses visent à effacer l'image d'une Chine communiste persécutrice, puisque les pays occidentaux nouvellement amis, libéraux et chrétiens, estiment cela déplorable. On tient à nous expliquer soigneusement la différence entre les religions et les superstitions; ces dernières sont farouchement combattues, contrairement aux premières, qui peuvent être tolérées dans la mesure où elles semblent indispensables aux minorités nationales. Mais 'la vie religieuse des individus, ainsi que les intérêts des confessions religieuses doivent être subordonnés à l'intérêt général', proclame M. XIAO XIANFA. Cette théorie scandalise un spiritualiste occidental.

Mais en Chine, une opinion fort ancienne et largement majoritaire a toujours placé les connaissances rationnelles et humanistes avant les requêtes religieuses, tenues pour explications inférieure et illusoire. Dans cette optique, la presse officielle continue donc à dénoncer les professionnels de la superstition, qui utilisent les bavures du système politique ou les incertitudes des jeunes pour 'réactiver d'anciennes pratiques' qui triomphaient 'aux temps féodaux'. Il ne faudrait donc pas que 'nos camarades chargés de l'éducation de la jeunesse sous-estiment... cette lie que l'ont croyait décantée' (Guangming, 25/8/80).

A L'UNIVERSITÉ L'AURORE

"La visite du *College de médecine de Shanghai*, héritier de la Faculté de médecine de l'Université L'Aurore et de ses bâtiments, intéressait autant nos cœurs que nos intelligences. Malgré la perte irrémédiable des livres qui brûlèrent pendant 48 heures, des rayons entiers échappèrent à ce vandalisme et des titres français, y compris des annales jésuites joliment reliées jusqu'en 1949, se trouvaient en bonne place lors de notre venue. Non sans émotion, il nous fut donné d'entendre de vénérables professeurs nous parler directement en français: formés ici et en France, ils persistent à maintenir des cours de médecine en français, pour 25 étudiants chaque année, afin que les plus doués d'entre eux puissent ensuite aller se spécialiser en France. La politique universitaire est la même vis à vis de l'Allemagne et du Japon. Ainsi profitent-ils de toutes les cultures et ne sont-ils pas réduits au passage obligé par les Américains.

Il y a actuellement 2,300 étudiants dont 2,000 sont internes. Ils disposent de 400,000 livres, et des revues médicales du monde entier, dont près de 80 en français. L'effectif enseignant dépasse le millier, et les chercheurs sont 350. Plus de 10,000 diplômés sont déjà sortis de ce collège, après cinq années d'études. Si Shanghai compte un médecin pour 1,000 habitants, il n'y a que deux millions de médecins pour toute la Chine, y compris la médecine traditionnelle, et les campagnes sont négligées. Les 'médecins aux pieds nus', après une formation brève (de trois à six mois), demeurent très proches des gens des villages, donnent les premiers soins et repèrent les cas graves qu'ils orientent vers les hôpitaux. Dans les dispensaires, un super-infirmier, après trois ans d'études, assure des soins constants et souvent très efficaces."

Reference: CHINA CATHOLIC COMMUNICATION, Circulaire No. 2, septembre 1981.

This is a new Circular Letter published by Jean Charbonnier, MEP, at new China Center established at A Queen Street, Singapore 0718.

PROJECTS TO REVISE THE CURRICULUM

James W. Sauvé, S.J.

(Dans le passé, les missionnaires ont grandement contribué au développement des écoles. Cela reste toujours la tâche principale d'un certain nombre de missionnaires travaillent en Afrique et en Asie. Des églises locales continuent à s'intéresser spécialement aux écoles et à l'enseignement. Cet article décrit un effort particulier des Jésuites aux États-Unis en vue d'une révision de leur programmes scolaires.)

A complete renewal of Jesuit education involves a change in attitude, and also a change in structure; and these changes are two edges of a sword; neither of them will be effective without the other. This article, however, is concerned with only one of these two dimensions: a change in structure.

Whether curriculum is defined in a narrow sense ("what is taught in the classroom") or in a wide sense ("all those elements of school life over which the school has some control"), curriculum is the heart of the educational process, and to speak of renewal in educational structure is to speak of renewal of the curriculum.

And yet, this cannot be the first step of the process. For the curriculum is only a means--and the goal must first be clarified. What is the educational process trying to achieve?

Different Provinces or countries have clarified the goal in different ways: through a projet éducatif, or an ideario, or a rationale. In the United States, and also in Australia, the goal has been clarified concretely, by trying to describe "what we would like the graduate of one of our schools to be like."

Because it is an idea that may provoke thought, and perhaps spark new ideas for renewal, in other countries, we describe one of the profiles here.

CORD: Curriculum Improvement Process (U.S.A.)

The Commission on Research and Development (CORD), a commission of the Jesuit Secondary Education Association in the United States, has developed a complete manual for the revision of the school curriculum; it is currently being tested and revised. The process is complex, while a brief summary will not do it justice, space limitations prevent anything more.

The process begins with the question raised above: "What would we like the graduate of one of our schools to be like on the day of graduation?" The first attempt to answer the question resulted in a portrait that was far too mature to be a realistic description of someone at the age of eighteen. This document eventually became a profile of the graduate "at maturity". But the perspective gave a point of view from which to work: what should be done at the high school level that would at least give some promise of eventual blossoming into the graduate "at maturity"?

As is obvious, students will reflect considerable diversity; not everyone grows or matures at the same pace. A generalized description is an ideal to aim at, even though not all students will achieve all of the levels of growth described in the profile.

CORD developed a response which is seven pages long. We give here only the main elements:

"In describing the graduate, under five general categories, we chose those qualities which seem most desirable not only for this threshold period, but those which seem most desirable for adult life. These five general categories sum up the main aspects or areas of life most in accord with a full adult living of the Christian life...

I. Open to Growth

The high school student at the time of graduation has matured as a person--emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially, religiously--to a level that reflects some intentional responsibility for one's growth (as opposed to a passive, drifting, laissez faire attitude about growth). The graduate is at least beginning to reach out in his or her development seeking opportunities to stretch one's mind, imagination, feelings, and religious consciousness.

II. Intellectually Competent

By graduation the high school student will exhibit an appropriate mastery of the fundamental tools of learning and will be well on the way to honing emerging intellectual skills for more advanced levels of learning. He or she is beginning to see the need for intellectual integrity in other areas of concern such as the quest for religious truth and for social justice.

III. Religious

By graduation the high school student will have a basic knowledge of the major doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. The graduate will also have examined his or her own religious feeling and beliefs with a view to choosing a fundamental orientation toward God and establishing a relationship with a religious tradition and/or community. What is said here, respectful of the conscience and religious background of the individual, applies to the non-Catholic graduate of a Jesuit high school. The level of theological understanding of the Jesuit high school graduate will naturally be limited by the student's level of religious and human development.

IV. Loving

By the time of graduation, the high school student is well on the way to establishing his or her own identity. The graduate is also on the threshold of being able to move beyond self-interest or self-centeredness in relationship with significant others. In other words, he or she is beginning to be able to risk some deeper levels of relationship in which one can disclose self and accept the mystery of another person and cherish that person. Nonetheless, the graduate's attempts at loving are still awkward and relatively superficial; while clearly beyond childhood, the student has not yet arrived at the confidence and freedom of a mature person.

V. Committed to Doing Justice

The high school student at graduation has achieved considerable knowledge of the many needs of local and wider communities and is preparing for the day when he or she will take a place in these communities as a competent, concerned and responsible member. The graduate recognizes within self the potential for doing injustice and has begun to see injustices in some of the surrounding social structures. He or she has begun to acquire the skills and motivation necessary to live this commitment. Although this attribute will come to fruition in mature adulthood, some characteristics will have begun to manifest themselves earlier."

(Each of these five elements is specific in concrete details; the fifth, "Committed to Doing Justice" is followed, for example, by 14 points. Here is a sample:)

"By graduation, the Jesuit high school student:

1. is more aware of selfish attitudes and tendencies which lead one to treat others unjustly; consciously seeks to be more understanding, accepting, and generous with others.
2. is growing in awareness of the global nature of many current social problems surrounding human rights, energy, ecology, food, population, terrorism and arms limitations, and their impact on various human communities.
5. has been exposed to the needs of some disadvantaged segments of the community through working with them in community service programs and has gained some empathetic understanding for their conditions of living.
9. has begun to reflect on public aspects of the career one might choose to pursue.
12. is just beginning to understand the complexity of many social issues and the need for critical reading of diverse sources of information about them.
14. is just beginning to realize that the values of a consumer society are sometimes in conflict with the demands of a just society, and indeed with the Gospel."

Reference: EDUCATION SJ, July/August/September, 1981, 33.

GENOCIDE IN EL SALVADOR

Vincente Navarro

(Professeur de la Santé Publique à l'Université, Jean Hopkins, le Docteur Navarro était l'un des 11 membres du Tribunal sur le Salvador, qui a tenu ses réunions à Mexico City il y quelque temps. Le Docteur Navarro relève que la Junte ne pourrait pas survivre sans l'aide économique des Etats-Unis, Le Tribunal a reconnu la responsabilité de la Junte pour les crimes suivants contre l'humanité: génocide, pratique de la torture, disparition de personnes et violation des droits fondamentaux de la population du Salvador. Voici quelques extraits du rapport de Docteur Navarro.)

From the 9th to the 11th of February, 1981, a jury of the Permanent Tribunal of the Peoples met in Mexico City to consider and give a verdict on the charges brought by the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador against the current Salvadoran Christian Democratic-Military Junta of being responsible for "a systematic violation of the economic, political, cultural and social rights of the people of El Salvador and their right to self-determination," and "for...a qualitative and quantitative intensification of the violation of those rights, leading to a policy of both massive and selective extermination of the population."

The Commission argued that "these policies were carried out by an illegitimate government sustained from outside the country, especially by the U.S. government and by military forces, security forces and paramilitary groups who threaten the fundamental rights to life and physical integrity of the Salvadoran citizens."

The Human Rights Commission of El Salvador is an association of private citizens of El Salvador established in 1978 as a response to the rise in the level of repression by the armed apparatus of the state. They collect detailed and thorough information on violations of human rights in El Salvador, a task that they realize at enormous risk to their lives. Their headquarters in El Salvador has been bombed frequently and several members of the Commission have been assassinated. They used to publicize the violation of human rights on the Church radio station until it was dynamited by the Salvadoran police. Today, weekly information appears in the Church's paper *Orientacion* and in the *Independiente*, the latter turned into a bulletin after its facilities were destroyed by the junta's armed forces. The enormously valuable and courageous work of the Commission has attracted international attention and has gained it nomination for a Nobel Peace Prize.

The Commission works closely with many other Salvadoran groups. A very important one is the office of Legal Aid of the Archdiocese of El Salvador, founded by Archbishop Romero before his assassination. The

Archbishop was extremely popular among the poor of El Salvador--the majority of the population--for his unflinching support and defense of their economic, political and social rights. In his own words: "The Church could not be blind to the reality that while 2 percent of the landowners possess 60 percent of the land...98 percent own 30 percent; that while 8 percent of Salvadorans receive 50 percent of the national income, three million Salvadorans subsist on less than \$10 per month; that only 16 percent of the economically active are employed throughout the year." One of his last statements was that "the Church has to live side by side with our poor people. I personally will struggle until all our people are free." As part of his commitment to the people, he established the Legal Aid office to support the poor in the defense of their rights.

The courage and Christian commitment of Archbishop Romero cost him his life. The judge in charge of the investigation of Archbishop Romero's assassination, Otilio Ramirez Amaya, declared before the Tribunal that the Archbishop was murdered by the security forces with the knowledge of and acceptance by the armed forces and by the junta. Because of his knowledge of these facts, the judge's life was threatened by the security forces; and after an attempt on his life, he had to escape the country. It should be added that to date no one has been detained for the Archbishop's murder.

For three very intense days, peasants, rural and urban workers, priests, Protestant ministers, nuns, teachers, university professors, lawyers, judges, journalists, former junta ministers, former government officials and many others testified on the situation in El Salvador before the Tribunal and the international press and media which had arrived from all over the world to cover the event. The U.S. media were conspicuously absent. In the audience, in addition to the general public that crowded the auditorium, there were also political leaders from Latin American progressive and democratic forces, leaders of European unions, members of European parliaments, religious figures from several countries, representatives of the World Council of Churches and of many other concerned groups.

On the fourth day, the judges met in closed session to discuss the evidence submitted to the Tribunal for the Liberation of Peoples, which was founded in 1979 in Bologna, Italy, "to examine the serious and systematic violations of rights of people whether committed by states, by authorities other than states, or by private groups or organizations; also, if required, to examine the responsibility of their authors according to the Nuremberg principles" and "to promote universal and effective respect for the fundamental rights of people by determining whether these rights have been violated, by examining the causes of such infringements and by pointing out to world public opinion the authors of those violations."

Today--and in spite of the resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly on December 15, 1980, asking all governments of the world not to provide any military assistance to El Salvador--the U.S. government has continued to be the main provider of arms and police equipment to the junta.

VERDICT OF THE TRIBUNAL

- Based on all the evidence submitted, the Tribunal:
- (1) Established that the military junta is culpable of grave, systematic and repeated violations of human rights, the fundamental rights of the human person.

- (2) Stressed the particular gravity of those violations aimed at the destruction of groups of persons because of their political opinions or their actual or potential opposition to the junta.
- (3) Considered that the deliberate and massive character of those acts can be considered a crime of genocide.
- (4) Observed that the military junta uses torture in a generalized and systematic way and is guilty of cruel, inhuman and degrading measures against insurgents, political opponents and all sectors of the population which the junta considers suspect.
- (5) Judged the Salvadoran state, groups organized by it and groups in complicity with it as responsible for crimes against humanity.
- (6) Noted that the above-mentioned organs of the state and groups related to it are guilty of forced disappearance of persons who are arrested or kidnapped.
- (7) Declared that through these methods the military junta imposes its illegitimate power on the people of El Salvador with the purpose of negating the people's right to sovereignty and their right to political self-determination as recognized by Articles 5 and 7 of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples, by instruments of international law and by the Constitution of the Republic of El Salvador proclaimed on January 8, 1962.
- (8) Stated that as a consequence, the people of El Salvador have a legitimate right of insurrection as stated in (a) Article 7 of the Constitution of El Salvador, (b) Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of People, (c) the Declaration of Independence of the United States of July 4, 1776, and (d) the Vatican document *Populorum Progressio* of March 26, 1967.
- (9) Condemned the junta as responsible for the following crimes against humanity: genocide, practice of torture, disappearance of persons and violations of the fundamental rights of the people of El Salvador.
- (10) Consequently reminded all states of the world--in conformity with the Convention of December 9, 1948, on the prevention and repression of the crime of genocide--of their duty to extradite all members of the military junta of El Salvador, as well as their duty to abstain from giving to the junta any military or economic support which could be used against the people of El Salvador.
- (11) Denounced the government of the U.S. for its complicity with the junta of El Salvador in the perpetration of crimes against humanity.
- (12) Made a call to all states of the world, and in particular to states neighboring El Salvador, to treat Salvadoran refugees according to principles of international human rights and, in particular, the Convention of 1951.

Members of the Tribunal jury were: George Wald, *Nobel Prize winner, Harvard University*; Harvey Cox, *U.S. Protestant theologian*; James Petras, *State University of N.Y.*; Vicente Navarro, *John Hopkins University*; A. Bentoumi, *former Minister of Justice, Algeria*; Sergio M. Arcoc, *Catholic Bishop, Cuernavaca*; A. Uribe, *lawyer*; Edmond Jouve, *the Sorbonne, Paris*; Ernesto M. Antunes, *Portugal*; Richard Baumlin, *member of Parliament, Switzerland*; & Giulio Girardi, *Catholic philosopher and theologian, Italy*.

Reference: WORLD PARISH, Vol. 21, July/August 1981, No. 191.