

82/No. 1.

January 15, 1982

In this issue: The three main contributions deal with the emerging Church today. Rosemary Haughton challenges us to recognize those areas of the organization labelled "Church" which are in fact "dead". Some situations are beyond doubt, she writes, quite clearly dead, and we shall not find the living Lord there. No amount of enthusiasm, exhortation, imaginative liturgies or redesigned churches will do more than decorate the tomb. We must turn away from the places of the dead and look elsewhere for the living Lord.

The first part of Bob Schreiter's article is a valuable overview of the issues facing contextual theologies in the Church. The new sensitivity to context, to the question of what theology is meant to do and to whom it is addressed, will change the face of how we do theology in both the so-called "First" and "Third" worlds.

The Editorial from Concilium summarizes the tensions between local Churches and directs attention to many of Schreiter's points. "La théologie ne peut pas plus se faire comme un travail dans la journée: elle doit désormais se faire comme une réflexion à la fin de la journée de travail."

The Brazilian Bishops write of violence and the need of fraternal acceptance of one another. They castigate the National Security law as a deplorable example of protecting the State and dominating groups while failing to protect the ordinary citizen, trampling on the rights of the weak, the poor and foreign born.

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Coming Events:

Sedos Seminar: Villa Cavaletti
March 10th-13th, 1982

THERE IS HOPE FOR A TREE

Rosemary Haughton
(Continued)

("Force nous est de reconnaître qu'il existe dans l'Eglise des organismes morts, bien qu'ils présentent une certaine apparence de vie. Ils font penser à ces gens que l'on maintient en survie par des appareils médicaux alors que toute expression de vitalité est manifestement terminée." "Il existe aussi des situations où il n'y a même pas une apparence de vie; nous n'y trouvons pas le Seigneur vivant. Dans de tels cas, l'enthousiasme, suite à une réorganisation de la paroisse, les exhortations, les liturgies imaginatives, les comités d'action sociale, les changements dans les bâtiments de l'église ne seraient rien de plus que de prétendre redécorer une tombe. Ne devons-nous pas nous détourner de ces lieux de mort et chercher ailleurs le Seigneur ressuscité?" Ed).

CHAPTER VI

"...THOUGH ITS STUMP DIE IN THE GROUND..."

There is great need for a good theological grasp of the nature of the church, for the reasons already discussed, and this grows from prayer and practice, reflected on together and with awareness of tradition and a live sense of the relevance of Scripture, so that people learn to understand the 'locus' and character of the church in New Testament categories rather than in those of sociologists of religion.

The sociologist identifies the church in terms of its structures and officials. The New Testament looks for the signs of the presence of Christ in gathered people and it is important to cultivate this, so that it becomes a kind of 'instinct' or 'feel' for the quality of being which betrays the real presence of Christ in the group. This also implies an ability to detect the absence of that quality--the easily recognizable but hard-to-describe phenomenon of a group that structurally 'looks like' a church, but has somehow 'died', and this painful kind of discernment needs to be considered in detail.

'A MAN'S FOES WILL BE THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD'

A new church especially needs a willingness to accept misunderstanding without either defiance or timidity. The Spirit is 'not a Spirit of timidity' but gives us the confidence to cry 'Abba' - to claim our status as children of God and heirs of Christ. Misunderstanding and opposition are bound to come. Jesus repeatedly warned that they would; they are even in some sense a proof of the authenticity of what is emerging. They have to be dealt with in prayer and recognized as a constant feature of genuine Christian experience. This includes the most painful kind of all, which is opposition from relations, friends and fellow Christians whom one respects and loves. The likelihood - even certainty - of this is spelled out in unmistakable terms in the gospels.

Linked to this is a new, important kind of discernment which has to be done by people involved in new churches, especially the just-emerging ones, and they will need, in this, the help of those sent to them in the way described. This concerns relationships between the 'old' and 'new' churches. (But to use those terms may be deceptive--they are not mutually exclusive.)

When new churches are being helped towards recognition of Christ as their center and meaning they become aware of contrast not only with their own previous condition but with other kinds of situations labeled 'church' in which they may have been themselves involved. For instance, in a religious community in which some are coming to awareness of the Lord's call to them to respond as a church, these people will more and more become aware not only that they themselves are becoming different but that the surrounding community, which does not share this awareness, is a reality they need to respond to in some way - and how is the agonizing question. This is such a basic dilemma for emerging churches in this 'post-Christian' world that one of the chief tasks of the church for some time to come must be to discern the right decisions and responses in this area.

"HE IS NOT HERE, HE IS RISEN"

The 'model' for this is the recognition of the risen Christ. What the new churches have to do, and what those called to help them have to do, is to discern the presence of the living Lord. The key to this is the question of the angel to the women at the tomb; 'Why do you seek the living among the dead?'

We have to learn to recognize those areas of the organization labelled 'church' (as well as corresponding aspects of 'secular' life) which are, in fact, 'dead', although they may have an appearance of life. They are, perhaps, like people kept 'alive' by machines when all possibility of real life is over. And, like them, there are cases where a return to genuine life is a possibility, and others where it is so unlikely as to be irrelevant for practical purposes.

Also, there are situations which are not doubtful at all but quite clearly dead. We shall not find the living Lord there. No amount of enthusiasm (parish-reorganization, exhortation, imaginative liturgies, social action committees, or redesigned churches) will do more than decorate the tomb. We must turn away from the places of the dead and look elsewhere for the Lord who is risen.

This does not mean anger or rejection: We can properly grieve for and celebrate the dead, remembering with gratitude the old traditions and ways which have been alive, have been places where Christ was to be found, but are no longer. Anger and guilt are both misplaced, but we easily fall into such responses when we discover that something called 'church' (parish, liturgy, college, religious community, mission, building, project, conference, way of prayer, etc.) has 'died'. We feel 'let down', and angry, and also guilty, because we are responsible in some way for people caught in this. But the only truthful and obedient response is to leave it, as Jesus told his disciples to leave cities which would not hear their message.

This necessary 'leaving' certainly does not mean 'leaving' the people involved, however, in the sense of rejecting them or despairing of them. Even if they cannot yet perceive that what they are 'in' is not the living body of Christ but a corpse, there is always the hope that they will come to recognize his call. Someone else may succeed where we have failed to touch them. But their refusal (at the time) to listen does not excuse delay or sitting on the fence on the part of those who have come to the point of realizing the real situation, theologically. It is, indeed, often the case that the fact of being 'left' in such a way may be a needed challenge to re-thinking among those 'left behind.'

Guide lines for new churches: In considering the ways in which new churches can cope with this acute human problem, we can provide no 'solutions' but at least a few guide lines which can give us a basis for discernment and action may be helpful, remembering always that there are no tidy and clear cut demarcations.

It is important to recognize, for instance, that a genuine, Spirit-filled new 'church' can and does emerge from traditional structures, (though not dependent on them) as well as in the typical marginal situations. This happens when, for instance, a good parish just naturally 'overflows' into new churches which break through the structures of parish life but remain linked vitally to each other through their common 'parent'. Just in simple matters of behavior and attitude, the following seem to be sensible:

1. Members of new churches who come from a denominational tradition (and especially if they continue to live in contact with its structures and ministers) often and properly attend worship in their local church (building), as well as the meetings for worship of their 'household' church. (This naturally does not apply to people who come to an awareness of Christ for the first time in the context of the new church, unless they should wish to do so.)
2. Members should be prepared to accept legitimate directives and rulings from those in authority in church structures of their own tradition, even if this is painful and seems destructive. But it often happens that legitimate authority is exercised in illegitimate ways, and depends more on a species of moral blackmail and intimidation, used to control a situation which is feared, than on the exercise of genuine responsibility. It is traditionally recognized in Catholic moral theology that in such cases it is the duty of the obedient Christian to refuse to conform. Careful discernment is needed, but the principle is clear both in the gospels and in the history of the Church. (see.e.g. Galatians 2.11-14)
3. As a result of such proper resistance, various kinds of official harrassment are likely to be experienced, but members should take great care not to provoke opposition unnecessarily or to confuse provocation with genuine prophetic challenge.
4. As befits Christians, members of new churches should be careful to attribute the best possible motives to those who feel threatened by their presence, and not to interpret expressions of doubt, caution or criticism as necessarily evidence of antagonism. They may be, rather, an expression of anxiety and searching.
5. Members should be free in this relationship and not be governed by a sense of guilt that falsifies the situation. They should always be aware that God's action is invariably unexpected, and he will change people and situations which appear to us to be quite fixed.
6. As a background to all of this the new churches should maintain by prayer and study a clarity and confidence in God's guidance, so that in the long run the relationship between old and new may be such as to allow the emergence of forms of church life in which it will be possible for older patterns of ministry to find a new incarnation, discovering a deep continuity through a willingness to trust the Spirit to guide the church through a necessary (and always painful) discontinuity: the baptism in which the old

is drowned in order that it may emerge, transformed, into a new Easter relationship.

It is clearly the case, for instance, that it was not until the hostility of institutional Judaism forced the new 'Way' out of the synagogue that this violent discontinuity allowed a discovery of the deeper continuity which was to be so vital for the self-awareness of the church as God's people.

"HE WHO LOVES FATHER OR MOTHER MORE THAN ME IS NOT WORTHY OF ME"

The work of an emerging church in this area of relationship with the old can be crucial. In many cases this kind of discernment will actually be the point of conversion and acceptance of Christ whereby the pre-church becomes church. Those whose mission is to help this process must support and guide such discernment with great gentleness and compassion, as well as clarity and accuracy, because deep and genuine human loyalties and relationships are involved. This is a case where the Lord is often calling people to leave parents, wives, children, etc. with obedient love but never with contempt or hatred. But there is such a thing as false compassion, which tempts people to try to mitigate or 'cushion' the sharpness of the gospel demand. Jesus never failed to tell people the truth, even if it hurt or angered them, but he never did it in a way which provoked them unnecessarily, as if there were some virtue in making people angry.

From all this, an awareness is growing in many groups that there is a need for ways of formation and sacramental initiation proper to people who are drawn to Christ not from older churches, but directly into new ones. Linked to this is the whole question of ministry in and to the new churches, and what forms of commissioning are appropriate for them. This large and difficult subject cannot be properly dealt with here. But one can think theologically about it, as examples multiply of groups evolving with strong movement towards the moment of ecclesial independence and full responsibility, as churches within the 'great church'.

CHAPTER VII

"...LIKE A YOUNG PLANT..."

("THE LORD HEARS THE CRY OF THE POOR")

Resistance movements - alternative life-style: If new churches see themselves somewhat on the model of a 'resistance movement', their style of mission and ministry will tend to have a little the character of a guerrilla base, living as well as proposing an 'alternative life-style'. This whole question of 'life-style' is central to a faith which is incarnational.

It is essential to try to get some grasp of the implication of this for the new churches, as they reflect on the gospel demand for discipleship both in Scripture and in 'the signs of the times.' The demand laid on a church which 'resists' the power of this world is for identification with, and work for, the poor and oppressed. The whole church is more and more seen as existing and living for them, as Jesus did, and being them, as he was. That is why it is becoming normal for gatherings of Christians to draw up their

agenda for discussion around themes of social justice, urban renewal, and related subjects. But this tendency, although obviously good, can also indicate a loss of a sense of the 'overall' calling which is to evangelize. So the answer to the question, "What must the new churches do?" is indeed, "They must preach the gospel." but it is "good news to the poor". So that reply contains within it all the many concerns and works to which Christians are called, provided these spring from a converted mentality, a response of love to God in human beings, not one motivated by a Christian 'guilt-trip' over the poverty of others.

Missioned - to heal: We can see the model of this in the public life of Jesus himself, in the way he 'missioned' his disciples, and in the behavior of the earliest Christians. Jesus healed, comforted, warned, called, prophesied, but he did all this in the context of his overall mission which was to bring people to the Father, to transform them from within, so that a whole new kind of relationship (the 'Kingdom') could be discovered among them, and through them in all creation. The disciples were told to do the same thing. Their mission was to announce the Lord, but in that they were to heal and warn and comfort; this was to be part of their preaching, and a proper expression of the kind of thing in which they were involved.

THE CHURCH IS MISSION

The earliest churches took it for granted that the spreading of the gospel message was inherent in their own response to the call to 'repent and be baptized'. At first the spreading just 'happened' as we have seen.

Natural passing on: The gospel was carried not so much by deliberate 'sending' as by, first of all, the 'natural' passing on of experience in very local preaching; in and around Jerusalem. After Stephen's death, persecuted followers of the 'Way' were scattered through the country and took the news with them, so that new churches sprang up, which soon felt a need for more explicit teaching and help, and 'sent for' apostles to come to them, (e.g. to Samaria). So the idea that it was proper to send out people on mission was a result of reflection on what was actually happening - that is, it grew from an awareness (at first scarcely articulated) of the nature of the church as in mission. This is what is happening now. I have referred to the sense of restlessness, leading to mission, which grows in groups feeling too 'settled'.

The scattered: It happens more painfully among people alienated (scattered, like the earliest followers) from existing churches by disillusion, by problems over divorce, or by open conflicts with the institution in matters of conscience, e.g. over nuclear energy, low cost housing, war resistance, trades unions, and so on. When people with this kind of experience (or even worse) still feel themselves deeply Christian, they seek each other out for support and in order to find a way to be the church which makes sense to them and is obedient to the gospel.

All these and many others are examples of how the missionary character of the church becomes apparent in ways which seem 'accidental', as people struggle to live their faith. In and around those earliest 'missions', as new little churches were established, all kinds of other activities immediately and naturally developed as an expression of the being of the church, which is the presence and activity of Christ himself. Hospitality, and care of the poor, are two very obvious and important ones. In time, instruction

of converts was added to this and increasingly, attention had to be paid to the specifically Christian liturgical activity which was at first added to, but (among Gentiles) had to take the place of, Jewish types of ritual observance. All this was a very rapid growth, no more than about twenty years, and much of it was clear long before that.

Believing households: Even during the public ministry of Jesus himself, we can perceive a definite 'background' of the emergence of believing households. In some of these Jesus and his friends stayed on their travels, and in their comparative seclusion it was possible for the more intimate and leisurely unfolding of his teaching to take place (we can find references to these private occasions in Matthew and Luke, but the clearest indication of the kind of theological and 'formative' dialogue that developed in the small groups comes to us in the redeveloped and carefully preserved 'discourses' in John's gospel, which clearly draw together teaching originally experienced by the writer over many months.)

The household Churches created in this way were the places from which, as we have seen, various kinds of missions emanated. The publicly commissioned kind was the one on which Luke (in 'Acts') concentrated because that was his own life and what he was chiefly seeing, but even Luke gives frequent glimpses of the less visible kind of preaching by which families, friends, colleagues and neighbors were brought to the new faith through personal and informal contact.

The ending of Paul's letters gives us (if we use a little imagination) a vivid picture of the kinds of personal relationships which grew up between men and women in the travelling mission, and between these and the ones who worked to build up the local church and to spread its message locally. The 'gossip's gospel' and the 'travelling' mission as I have already described them show how this kind of thing is happening now.

- To be continued -

RECOMMENDED READING

1. The Invisible Control: Management Control of Workers in a US Electronic Company. Christina Tse. Center for the Progress of Peoples; 48, Princess Margaret Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong, 1981; Pp. 70.
 2. Kampuchea: Historical and Global Context of the Conflict. Cheung Ka-hing. Publishers as above. Pp. 51.
 3. Christianity in the Sudan. Giovanni Vantini. EMI, Bologna, Italy, 1981. Pp. 302.
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TOWARD A NEW AGE OF MISSION

Three books have so far been published on the proceedings of the INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MISSION, held in Manila, December 2-7, 1979. The books, TOWARD A NEW AGE IN MISSION, come in two volumes each containing some 370 pages, and featuring leading figures of the Catholic Church in Asia, the best known Asian theologians, missionary and pastoral experts discussing the present and the future of the Missionary Activity of the Church, particularly in Asia today.

VOLUME ONE contains the official papers of the Mission Congress, some photographs, other texts and documents. VOLUME TWO contains the position papers and the other documents of the Congress Workshops.

The set of two volumes costs US\$ 26.00 for the hard cover edition and US\$ 23.00 for the paperback edition. An additional US\$ 4.00 will be added on orders coming from the United States. Obtainable from: National Director, Pontifical Mission Aid Societies, 824 Don Quijote, Sampolac, Manila 2806, Philippines. (We recommend these volumes unreservedly. Ed).

PROGRAM OF MISSION STUDIES

July 11-16, 1982 - Liberation Theology in North America

The third of a series initially titled "American Spirituality and Liberation Theology". The 1982 workshop will explore the dynamics of Black and Women's Liberation theologies in the U.S. context, and their potential for effecting renewal in the Church and in society.

July 20-29, 1982 - Basic Ecclesial Communities

This intensive 10-day workshop is offered for the fifth consecutive year by Father Jose Marins and Sister Carolee Chanona, in response to the expressed need of missionaries both in the U.S. and from abroad. Attendance limited to 55 participants.

August 1-6, 1982 - The Critical Christian and Social Change.

Dr. Rudolf J. Siebert will compare and contrast the various movements for social change and their histories (primarily socialism and liberal Christianity). The agent and locus of social change are discussed, using relevant contemporary examples.

August 8-13, 1982 - Reflections on Christian Response to Violence in the World.

This seminar combines input from resource persons and the sharing of participant experiences so that a range of reflections on alternatives to violence enriches each session.

August 15-20, 1982 - The Gospel and Islam: An Ecumenical Challenge.

A seminar intended to foster understanding among North Americans concerning the great religion of Islam, and to suggest ways in which dialogue and friendship can be nurtured.

Missioners who are seeking renewal and updating, or preparation for overseas ministry during July and August are welcome to attend up to four of the workshops beginning July 11. Because of the intensity of these programs, all five would not be advised.

Enquiries to: Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545, U.S.A. Tel: (914) 941.75.75.

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TENSIONS ENTRE LES ÉGLISES
DU PREMIER MONDE ET DU TIERS MONDE

Virgil Elizondo et Norbert Greinacher

(What is the Local Church?) Confusion and misunderstanding arise from the equivocal use of the term "Local Church".

The Bishops of Asia see it as "a Church incarnate in a people, a church indigenous and inculturated. And this means concretely a church in continuous, humble and loving dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions - in brief, with all the life-realities of the people in whose midst the local church has sunk its roots deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own. It seeks to share in whatever truly belongs to that people: its meanings and its values, its aspirations, its thoughts and its language..." (Final Statement of the First Plenary Assembly of the FABC, Taipei, 1974, quoted in FABC PAPERS, No.25, "Reaching out in Dialogue in Asia").

In "Mutualé Relations"; for example, local Church is understood mainly in the canonical sense of "diocese" which in Roman canon law refers to an administrative unit established on a geographical, territorial basis.

The two usages can lead to widely differing ecclesiologies with far reaching consequences for Church structure, law, administrative practice, liturgy, mission etc. Which description best fits the reality of the Church in mission today? Must there be an exclusive use of either approach? Recognition of the complicated reality that is the local Church today could prevent needless confusion.

The following Editorial from Concilium is a concise 'status questionis' of the tensions that occur between local Churches of the so-called 'Third' and 'First' worlds. It serves also to draw attention to a recent issue of Concilium of particular interest to those engaged in Mission. Ed.)

De précédents numéros de Concilium ont présenté divers aspects d'un nouveau pluralisme qui naît dans la vie et la compréhension du christianisme. Bien que ce pluralisme ne soit pas même soupçonné ni désiré par certaines portions de l'Eglise, c'est une réalité de vie pour beaucoup d'autres. Ce numéro de théologie pratique explorera certaines des tensions que suscitent les expressions actuelles de ce pluralisme.

Nous avons tous conscience des nombreux usages différents des termes "Premier Monde" et "Tiers Monde". En ce qui concerne ce numéro, (de Concilium) nous considérons l'Europe occidentale et l'Amérique du Nord comme le Premier Monde. Nous prenons le Tiers Monde comme incluant les régions du globe où les pauvres, les marginalisés et les déshérités de la terre constituent la grande masse de la population. Ce sont aussi celles qui furent soumises à la mission, conquises et colonisées par les puissances d'Europe occidentale.

La conquête imposa un nouvel ordre social, une nouvelle religion et même une nouvelle vision du monde. Même s'il y a eu indépendance politique pour beaucoup de ces peuples, ils continuent de bien des manières à être économiquement et culturellement dominés et restent en général des peuples dépendants.

Plus on voit la totalité de la situation d'aujourd'hui, plus on est contraints de se demander: avons-nous réellement des Eglises du Tiers Monde, au plein sens théologique du mot "Eglise"?

Il semble que le mouvement de création de nouvelles Eglises ait généralement pris fin au terme du premier millénaire. Depuis lors, les Eglises du ~~Vieux~~ Monde ont fini par imposer leurs modèles ecclésiologiques au reste du monde.

La situation mondiale est telle que l'essor et le développement des Eglises nouvelles ne seront pas faciles. Il est évident qu'elles n'ont pas d'assise financière propre, de formation intellectuelle, de catéchèse, de liturgie, de droit ecclésiastique et de personnel. Beaucoup de ces Eglises dépendent encore de l'étranger en matière d'épiscopat, de personnel, de finances et de formation. L'Occident apparaît encore comme le centre de tout pouvoir et de toute autorité. Toute la vérité apparaît encore comme venant des universités occidentales et transmise par les voies de la civilisation occidentale.

Néanmoins, étant donné le pouvoir qu'a la Parole de Dieu de triompher de nos conduites humaines, les semences de l'Evangile ont été enfoncées profond. Elles ont progressivement pris racine et nous trouvons aujourd'hui le début d'une efflorescence d'Eglises vraiment nouvelles du Tiers Monde, à la périphérie des Eglises du Vieux Monde.

De la souffrance et de la misère des Eglises du Tiers Monde, l'Esprit tire une nouveauté qui va vraiment purifier, enrichir et revivifier les formes asservissantes et moribondes des Eglises du Vieux Monde.

Cette nouveauté évangélisatrice ne provient pas des grandes universités ou des centres de pouvoir. Elle naît spontanément à travers les Eglises du Tiers Monde de la réponse du peuple à la Parole de Dieu. Elle naît dans les nombreux mouvements populaires tels que les "communautés de base" et les multiples groupes qui se rassemblent autour des ministres de la Parole pour entendre le message de Dieu et chercher à lui répondre dans la foi.

Le peuple croyant prend conscience d'être l'Eglise et que l'Eglise est sienne, car l'Evangile s'adresse perpétuellement aux pauvres, et dans la réponse qu'ils lui donnent commence le Royaume pour tous les autres. Il y a un renouveau réel du christianisme des évangiles et de l'époque apostolique dans beaucoup de secteurs du Tiers Monde.

Une nouvelle fraîcheur ecclésiologique: De même qu'on n'attendait rien de bon en provenance de la Galilée, personne d'intelligent et de cultivé selon la sagesse de ce monde n'attendait certainement rien des pays et peuples soi-disant "arriérés" et "sous-développés" du Tiers Monde. Mais c'est précisément là que nous découvrons une nouvelle fraîcheur ecclésiologique, qu'on n'avait nullement soupçonnée ni imaginée. Comme le montre Morgan dans son article, les exemples de Jésus et de Paul suggèrent que la richesse, la puissance et l'attrait de l'Evangile se révèlent à travers les tensions théologiques et non par leur suppression.

La conviction des auteurs de ce numéro est que ces tensions, loin de détruire la catholicité et l'unité fondamentales de l'Eglise faciliteront l'émergence de nouvelles expressions, plus resplendissantes, de la véritable unité et universalité de l'unique Eglise. Elles sont le don le plus précieux de l'Esprit en notre temps. Elles vont purifier l'Eglise universelle de son asservissement à l'Occident. Cette purification conduira à une unité plus profonde et à une universalité plus évidente.

Notre unité catholique ne peut être une unité imposée, qui est l'unité de ce monde en quête de domination. L'unité de l'Evangile donne naissance à des Eglises nouvelles caractérisées chacune par sa propre langue, son patrimoine de musique, d'art, de sagesse, sa réflexion et son expression liturgique. C'est l'Esprit qui transforme cette diversité en éléments de construction d'une humanité nouvelle. L'Eglise ne repousse rien de ce que Dieu a cultivé à travers la créativité de chaque peuple particulier (LG 17).

Une nouvelle universalité: Elle ouvre le peuple à une nouvelle universalité de la communion humaine et de la participation fondée sur l'expérience de la commune paternité de Dieu, mais elle ne détruit pas l'originalité et les charismes uniques du peuple.

Après une étude initiale et un recensement des différents points que comporte le sujet, nous avons décidé de diviser ce numéro en trois parties.

I. La réalité conflictuelle des Eglises au milieu du monde archidivisé d'aujourd'hui;

II. quelques aperçus théologiques sur le développement historique des tensions entre unité et pluralisme;

III. quelques expressions concrètes des nouvelles formes de vie ecclésiale qui sont en train de naître et mettent au défi l'ordre ecclésial actuel qui a encore tendance à concevoir l'unité comme uniformité.

La situation mondiale: 1) Parce que l'Eglise existe dans le monde et ne peut agir ni même penser indépendamment de lui, nous avons fait débiter notre numéro par l'analyse de la situation mondiale d'inégalité et d'oppression globale, par HOUTART. C'est accablant! En analysant certains documents de hiérarchies nationales, FUSSEL montre comment des ecclésiologies différentes se développent à partir de conditions socio-économiques différentes. Les théologiens n'étant pas immunisés contre ce conditionnement, CHENU expose clairement combien ils ont besoin eux aussi de libération. Il montre comment l'activité théologique du Tiers Monde n'est ni une imitation ni un développement, mais la naissance de formes nouvelles de théologie qui seront ailleurs libératrices pour tous les théologiens.

La tradition de l'Eglise: 2) Dans la seconde partie, nous nous sommes tournés vers la tradition de l'Eglise pour y chercher lumière. MORGAN spécifie la nette affirmation du Nouveau Testament: l'unité qui respecte la diversité est un idéal chrétien qui ne sera jamais facile, mais pour lequel il faut toujours lutter. CUNNINGHAM montre comment la quête même de l'unité dans les choses essentielles conduisit les Eglises postapostoliques à une très grande diversité.

Dans son article télescopique, FOLLIARD établit comment les efforts pour aider les masses à devenir un peuple ont développé l'idéal d'une Eglise et d'un Empire unis en chrétienté. Ce modèle allait jeter pour base de l'unité l'uniformité. DUSSEL développe les conséquences de cet Empire: l'unité ecclésiastique dans une expansion missionnaire de l'Eglise commençant au XIV^e siècle, l'Eglise et les façons de l'Europe furent imposées à de nouveaux peuples, mais de nouvelles Eglises n'eurent pas la possibilité d'émerger.

Signes très concrets: 3) Enfin, dans la troisième partie, nous avons présenté certains des signes très concrets et promoteurs d'une vie nouvelle qui se manifestent dans les Eglises partout dans le monde. Nous avons commencé par le plus fondamental: l'expérience de l'Eglise à la base. C. BOFF, du Brésil, présente le dynamisme et la puissance exceptionnels des communautés chrétiennes de base. Non seulement une nouvelle ecclésiologie se dégage, mais également une nouvelle idée du théologien. Les *comunidades* sont des "théologiens collectifs" où personne ne fait de théologie pour personne.

Le théologien *per se* est la communauté croyante cherchant à éclairer et à développer le sens de sa foi. Cela ne supprime pas la nécessité de spécialistes, mais cela les situe au sein de la souffrance, des luttes et des joies du peuple. Cela exige de nouvelles normes d'accréditation et de crédibilité des théologiens. Les grades universitaires, les chaires d'enseignement et les publications ne sont plus les critères ultimes, mais la communion, la participation à la vie commune et aux luttes du peuple comme l'a souvent indiqué Gustavo GUTIERREZ, la théologie ne peut plus se faire comme un travail dans la journée; elle doit désormais se faire comme une réflexion à la fin de la journée de travail.

VAN NIEUWENHAVE tire les implications de Puebla pour l'Eglise universelle. C'est l'Eglise des pauvres qui met en question l'Eglise tout entière. Les Eglises du centre, accoutumées à être les enseignantes, seront-elles capables de devenir les élèves? Ou même des partenaires égales dans le dialogue?

Le cardinal ARNS de Sao Paulo, au Brésil, serre de plus près la question par un article stimulant et futuriste sur la manière de traduire la catholicité théologique de l'Eglise en une réalité sociologique. Cela ne se fera pas par de nouvelles théories ou théologies, mais en vivant concrètement l'option des Eglises en faveur des pauvres. C'est par la communion de la charité que la pleine catholicité des Eglises apparaîtra dans toute sa splendeur.

Concilium 1980

- fin -

ISSUES FACING CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGIES TODAY

Robert J. Schreiter, C.P.P.S.

(L'article de Bob Schreiter, dont nous présentons ici la première partie, est une vue d'ensemble fort valable sur les enjeux que présentent les théologies dites "contextuelles" dans l'Eglise d'aujourd'hui, théologies dont la place paraît devenir de plus en plus importante. Ce qu'une telle théologie est censée apporter, et aussi ceux à qui elle est destinée, excluent une théologie "unique et immuable" telle que nous l'avons connue. L'influence de la théologie "contextuelle" changera le visage de la théologie, autant dans le "premier" que dans le "tiers"-monde.)

The past five years have seen a remarkable growth in contextual theologies. Prior to that period, much of the discussion about such theologies was apologetic in intent, pointing out why a more contextually sensitive theology was necessary, and why the theologies emerging from the North Atlantic academies were inadequate for most parts of the world. Alongside this apologetic attempt came a continuing call for more contextual forms of theology. Indeed, it could be said that more energy seemed to have been expended on the call for such theologies than on their actual production.

Creating contextual theologies: In the past five years, however, more and more attempts have been made to actually create contextual theologies. It is quickly becoming an accepted movement in the theology of the Christian Church, and can certainly be counted as one of the most exciting developments in theology in a long time. The experience of recent years prompts a consideration, not only of what issues contextual theologies are facing at this juncture in history, but also what new and significant problems they are opening up for us in their reflection upon the Gospel. If followed through with some consistency, contextual theologies are going to change the way theologies are created and used, not only in Third World situations, but in the North Atlantic communities as well.

All theologies related to a context: Perhaps the single most important insight which has already arisen out of this enterprise is that *all* theologies are related to a context, that even so-called "*perennial theologies*" grow out of particular contexts and respond to specific needs in concrete believing communities. In view of this, the issues facing contextual theologies today which will be considered here, and the questions growing out of such reflections, are addressed not only to the Third World Churches, but to the North Atlantic Churches as well.

First Areas: In what follows, I would like to outline five areas where this twofold challenge of issues to be resolved and emerging new insights can be found. The first of these areas has to do with how theology itself is undertaken and done; the other four deal with issues which arise out of the contexts in which these theologies are created.

To be sure, most of these same issues can be located in older theologies as well. But they do not seem to obtrude on our consciousness in quite the same way as they do in the newer contextual theologies in the Third World. If one sign of the maturity of local church and its theology is the types of challenges they can bring to other and older churches, then many of the local churches in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Latin America are already in the full bloom of adulthood and should be recognized as such.

It goes without saying that the five areas which I present here are done so only in a summary form, since the issues have not been resolved, nor have the new insights been thoroughly assimilated. But bringing some of these issues together in this fashion might help give a picture of the kinds of coherence that are emerging in contextual theologies today, and help us all see how the living power of the Gospel is finding voice in new situations.

ONE: THE SCOPE AND SHAPE OF THEOLOGY

When a theology becomes more sensitive to its context, it becomes more reflective upon both its scope and its shape. It allows for a kind of critical reflection upon itself that makes it more sensitive to the church for which it emerges and for the larger Church which it serves.

In terms of scope, two important issues emerge: the nature of theology, and the nature of its audience. In other words, what is theology intended to do, and to whom is it addressed?

The nature of theology: The classic definition of theology as *fides quaerens intellectum* was long understood within the mainstream of the Church as focussing upon the clarifications of revelation, especially in terms of other attempts at knowledge. The best kinds of theology presented faith in clear terms, and showed the levels of relationship to rationality (in the Middle Ages), and to the natural and social sciences (post-Enlightenment period). This kind of theology had a twofold purpose: of providing a place for religious belief within a given form of worldview (structured along either Aristotelian or post-Copernican lines), and of providing the basis for an apologetic in dialogue with competing forms of knowledge.

The classic statement of this approach can be found in the opening question of Aquinas' *Summa* (Ia, q. 1, aa. 2-10), where the place of theology is charted out within the whole framework of human knowledge. The audience of this kind of theology was primarily the other disciplines in the academy, and secondarily the apologetic needs of the believing community as it faced a growing differentiation in knowledge and beliefs in the culture in which it found itself.

The nature of the audience: The newer contextual theologies remind us how much context can shape the scope of our reflection on faith. The kind of theology represented in the *Summa* of Aquinas grew out of the confrontation of a monastic-based theology with the university setting, beginning in the twelfth century. This was perhaps the first time in history that there was a substantial class of full-time theologians, who engaged in theology as something more than an occasional enterprise. Indeed, most of what would count as theology for the Western, Latin Church has since that time been done by such full-time theologians.

The sheer complexity of what has been created in the last eight centuries means that "theology" can only be undertaken by such experts; mastery of this complex tradition requires full-time study. When one compares this to patristic theology, or to the theological tradition which has continued in the Eastern Church, one can see the difference - there *theologia* has more to do with the contemplation of God and the giving of that experience voice, rather than the complex interrelating of Christian and scientific forms of knowledge.

But what happens when we shift to different circumstances, where the Gospel is just beginning to find its voice in a new situation, or where the urgency of the social situation requires a new and different voice? What happens to the scope of theology then? Let me try to outline what can be some of the results of this shift.

Occasional enterprise: First of all, theology could well be returning to much more of an occasional enterprise, in the sense of being undertaken only as demands or needs arise. This does not mean that all theology would be apologetic (to serve the needs of the community only), nor would it be polemic (to address a group of outsiders or dissidents within), but rather that theological reflection need not try to build total systems all the time. The comprehensive representation of belief will continue to be of importance, to be sure, but perhaps will not enjoy the pre-eminence of the *Summae* of the past. One of the reasons for this is that some theological "problems" may not really be worth thinking about. They are 'system-immanent', i.e., created by the need for systematization. When occasion and context more firmly direct theology, system can no longer be its own context. It will be more answerable to a community.

Faith of a believing community: Second, theology will become once again more directed toward articulating the faith of a believing community, rather than primarily concerned about its *belle image* alongside competing forms of belief. This is not a retreat into sectarianism as it might appear. Rather it emphasizes an important consideration of audience. Theology is primarily for believers, and only in an indirect sense for non-believers. Theology is ordinarily not a form of evangelization (although the evangelizer does have a theology); it is the self-understanding of an already evangelized community. As such, a theology needs to be answerable to its own community, and to the larger community of the global Church.

One of the main reasons for the oft complained "irrelevance" of the Church is the "irrelevance" of its theology; it is addressing some other audience, either outside the believing community or only a small minority within. This can lead to the puzzlement and neglect of the believing community. It is often directed at a single class, those with university education. The new theologies are trying to bring us back to speaking of *this* concrete situation, and *this* concrete church.

Mode of production: Third, the mode of production for theologies changes. To use a Marxian approach here, the means of theological production have rested primarily with a theologian class, who by sheer dint of their extended period of education would have to be considered part of that upper middle class, along with lawyers, physicians and university professors. The fact that much theology seems to have been directed more toward the university than toward the full range of the believing community reflects the class interest of theologians.

What the contextual theologies are teaching us is that the means of production in theology require the participation of a wider range of believers. If indeed God has a preferential option for the poor, and it is the poor and the oppressed who best understand the message of salvation, then the task of theology cannot be left entirely in the hands of professional theologians, who most often cannot be counted among the poor and the oppressed.

At the same time, one cannot romanticize the poor and oppressed as the sole source of theology; this simply shifts the problem of ownership of the means of production to a different class. What is being said by the newer theologies, however, is that the basis for theological reflection does lie with the broader community, who develop theology with the aid of church leaders, prophets, and professional theologians. This has led to listening to the larger community in new kinds of ways.

Perhaps the most significant way of developing these theologies has been in the various types of reflection carried out in the basic Christian communities of Latin America and Asia. The work of the Solentiname community in Nicaragua (Cardenal 1976) is one good example of this.

2. In terms of shape: The shape of contextual theologies is changing also. Theology since the twelfth century has found its prime form in the discursive treatise, which tries to relate theological knowledge to its sources and to its competitors. What is happening in the new theologies is both a rediscovery of other and older forms, as well as the development of new forms. I have tried to describe elsewhere how these forms relate to their contexts (Schreier 1978); let me outline here some of the retrievals of form and also the new forms which are emerging.

Certainly hymnody has a long history, not only as a means for expressing theology, but also as a source of further theology. It remains to this day a major source of theology in Orthodox Christianity, and served as a genre of theologizing for Aquinas, Luther, Wesley and Newman. James Cone reminds us that the spirituals are a prime form of theology for the Black Community in the United States (Cone 1972). Hymns created in new situations--and not just older hymns adapted to the melodic patterns of the new culture are a prime form of theology.

The Bible commentary seems to be one of the most fruitful places for contextual theology. The reflection upon Scripture in basic Christian communities in the Third World has often introduced other Christians into new insights. The questions about what parts of the text are focussed upon, where the problems lie in interpretation, and where the thrust of the message lies can shift from culture to culture and from class to class. It should be remembered that much of patristic theology was of this sort - sermons and commentaries on books of the Bible.

Even North Atlantic biblical criticism is beginning to include other approaches besides historical criticism among its exegetical methods. While the historical-critical method has given us many new and profound insights into the biblical text, it focuses perhaps too much on getting at the mind of the author, and plays down the fact that the text has a life of its own. This life of the text should, in principle, be accessible to any believing Christian under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The meditation is another form being retrieved, especially in Asian theologies (Koyama, *passim*). Long a part of monastic tradition, this form is leaving the cloister and becoming more consciously involved in the life and the metaphors of new cultural settings.

Other forms that are emerging as possibilities include the use of *proverbs* as a way of conveying Christian theology, especially in Africa (Randall 1976), oral forms (Mbiti 1979), *stories* (Flannery 1976), collections of prayers (Shorter 1978; Mbiti 1977), and the pamphlets and tracts that are so much part of liberation theology around the world today.

What all of this means is that the discursive treatise is becoming but one form among many. The shape of theology will be more and more determined by:

1. what constitute the primary genres for transmitting knowledge in a culture, and
2. the kinds of needs the theology is addressing.

Hence large theological books will have little place in a culture where many are too poor to buy such books, or have no electricity to read after a day's labor.

The systematic treatise will continue to have a place in theology, but a much reduced one. The "occasional" nature of theology will contribute to the repositioning of the systematic form of theology.

In summary, one can say that this new sensitivity to context, to the question of what theology is meant to do and to whom it is addressed, will change the face of how we do theology in both the First and the Third World. New bonds are being made with the community of believers, which will shape how this enterprise is undertaken, who undertakes it, and who gives the final produce its stamp of authenticity.

If this says something about the scope and shape of such theology, doing theology in a contextual way has also consistently raised a number of issues which cut across cultural boundaries, and are the subject of struggle in many places today. The four areas which follow try to indicate four major

issues facing contextual theology.

TWO: CULTURAL IDENTITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The twin problems of cultural identity and social change can be at the center of the struggle for a contextual theology in many parts of the world. Let us look first at these two areas separately, and then at their interaction.

The question of cultural identity was one of the first to prompt the consideration of developing contextual theologies at all. Foreign theologies, which addressed problems not even present in the culture (as the meaning of atheism in a West African setting), or problems inadequately (polygamy in African cultures), led people to look for new possibilities. Some early attempts at adaptation kept the shape and scope of the foreign theology while introducing local cultural content (Nyamiti 1971; 1973). Today many would say that not only are the problems part of cultural identity, but the solutions and modes of expression as well.

But what constitutes a theology with an adequate cultural identity? Two principal means have been sought out. On the one hand, non-Christian forms of theology already present in the culture are used as a source of inspiration. One sees examples of this in India (in contact with literate religious systems), and in Africa and in North America (Stolzmann, 1976) in the use of tribal ritual.

On the other hand, attempts are made to systematically set out the worldview as a framework for talking about traditional themes such as God, salvation, grace, and so on. This form was tried early on in Africa by Tempels (1944), and has been revived now among natives of a particular culture, using their own terms and their own manner of organization (Ochoa 1978; Tuza 1978). How effective this approach will be remains to be seen.

The principal difficulties of establishing cultural identity revolve around the fact that theologians often grasp only retrospective aspects of a culture. They draw upon customs and ways dying out in a culture, thereby creating an archaic or nostalgic theology. This "ethnographic" approach (as it is called in Africa) has come under some attack, especially when the theology does not take account of social change and the oppressive aspects of culture (Appiah-Kubi and Torres, 1979).

Yet the intent of this theology, albeit imperfectly realized, is a sound one.

We are now acutely aware that one of the major tasks of theology is to help establish the identity of the Christian community. Theology helps to clarify the values, establish the beliefs, locate the ills, and chart the trajectories of a community. Any contextual theology, it would seem, will have to be concerned with these problems. To fail at this leads to a lapse into ideology.

Rapid social change is a reality in most parts of the world where contextual theologies are emerging. Large-scale urbanization, the introduction of technology, and the migration patterns which these two factors create are having an impact on villages and cities, in jungles and in mountain areas throughout the world. The increasing sense of hopelessness in the international economy is grinding down the Third World. The

need for directed social change, and the realities which make this urgent, are part of any contextual theology responding to the Church today.

The liberation theologies of Latin America were the first to respond to this need. Today, liberation theology would have to be called the most common and most prominent form of contextual theology. Rather than beginning with analysis of values, customs, and traditions, this kind of theology starts with the socio-economic and political situation. It has been chiefly responsible for bringing the new contextual theologies to the attention of the First World academics.

There has been a gradual maturing of these voices since their emergence in the 1960's. They have attained a certain level of legitimacy even on an official level, as evidenced in the documents of the CELAM meetings at Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979). The international meetings of Third World theologians in Dar es Salaam (1976), Accra (1977), Colombo (1979) and Sao Paulo (1980) have brought wider attention to this movement. That theology starts with a social reality rather than individualized experience, that God's revelation is a response to our need for salvation and liberation - these are key themes which have contributed to the theological understanding of the wider Church.

These theologies face problems as well: The principal difficulty is a new form of elitism, of a conscientized class of theologians still doing theology on behalf of the oppressed. The sometimes naive use of models of social change, fundamentalist reading of the Scriptures, and a vulgar Marxist framework are also problems. But the confrontation of liberation theology with folk piety (*religiosidad popular*), and the ability to use methods of analysis more critically, bode well for continued growth in the sensitivity and sophistication of liberation theologies.

When one brings these two sets of issues together - cultural identity and social change - the shape of theology has to change. What is rationally knowable gives way to an analysis of the social situation as the starting point. The dialectic between these two teaches us that to concentrate solely on cultural identity loses the growing edge of the culture; to concentrate solely on social change risks the soul of the culture, and so can drift away from concrete life in the culture. An adequate convergence of these two concerns has yet to be achieved. But the confrontation of liberation theology and folk piety is a hopeful sign of where we might be going (Seladoc, 1977).

(References cited will be given at the conclusion of Part II of this article in the next Sedos Bulletin.)

- To be continued -

BRAZIL BISHOPS
FRATERNITY AND VIOLENCE (EXCERPTS)

(Voici quelques extraits d'un document publié par les évêques du Brésil sur les maux entraînés par la violence et sur la nécessité, à la fois, d'une entente mutuelle et d'une coopération fraternelle. Ed)

The situation

1. We, the Bishops of the State of Sao Paulo, met in General Assembly in Itaici, the 5th to the 7th of November 1980. Conscious of the needs of the People of God who have been entrusted to us, we, as Pastors, have reflected on the insecurity and violence which is on the increase in our Country, particularly in the large urban centers. It is affecting all levels of the population.

7. The situation of violence and its roots are not recent. In the past, slavery subdued with extreme brutal violence, the Indians and Africans. Today, workers are feeling that they are the direct heirs of this past situation: slavery weighs heavily on the shoulders of a large section of the population who has to live on a salary, especially those who are unemployed or underemployed.

8. Violence rises from the hearts of men who close themselves to love and justice, whether from collective or individual selfishness, and which is crystalized in unjust socio-economic structures.

9. Violence against the poor has been aggravated in these last years on account of the socio-political model whose main objective is development, erroneously formulated as economic development which concentrates wealth in the hands of the few, at the expense of the misery and poverty of the majority.

11. Pope Paul VI reminded us that, "It is not licit to increase the wealth of the rich and the power of the strong while at the same time the misery of the poor is a fact and the slavery of the oppressed becomes worse" (*Populorum Progressio*, 33).

The Word of God

22. The Word of God calls us in a very clear and decisive manner, asking us not to close our hearts to the anguish and needs of our brothers. We would be closing our hearts to God Himself, since it is He "who sees justice done for the orphan and the widow, who loves the stranger and gives him food and clothing" (Dt. 10:18).

29. Moreover, this God who asks us to build a peace from justice, who calls us to forgiveness and gentleness, but at the same time condemns that which exploits and oppresses, also invites us to seek ways that will lead us to overcome injustice and violence.

What must be done

32. In order to create a critical consciousness, catechetics in its various phases and forms, especially that of children and adolescents, should explicitly include the consciousness of the defense of human rights which flows from the dignity of being sons of God.
34. There exist plans of action already proven in life situations by the movements of non-violence through concrete gestures that announce the message of justice and peace of the Gospel for a greater realization of the values of the Kingdom of God among men. These are offered to the People as an option.
35. Since violence cannot be combated without respecting and encouraging the grass-roots organizations, we recommend the BCCs (Basic Christian Communities) and other christian groups be supported and motivated as a form of participation of the laity in the mission of the Church.
37. We propose as a theme for reflection especially for the Communities, the intimate relation between faith and liberating action for the transformation of the social structures.
38. The generalized violence will not end without courageous and urgent change of structures which touch upon the economic and political models. It is here that... "the luxury of a minority constitutes an insult to the misery of the great masses of people" (*Populorum Progressio*, no. 31).
- This change is especially necessary in certain laws. The National Security Law is a deplorable example. These laws, while protecting the State and dominating groups, fail to protect the ordinary citizen and trample on the rights of the weak, the poor and foreign-born.
41. The gravity of the problematic of violence demands complete and rapid action on the part of the judiciary power. To accomplish this, it is necessary that the State provide conditions for effective independence of the Magistracy. The State must supply human and material resources necessary for the exercise of its mission.
42. It is to be concluded that these and other forms show the necessity of an ample re-examination of the constitutional structures of the country and that these be then legitimized by the will of the people. Only in this way will we obtain the longed-for democratic regime.
43. Even in the present situation, we make an appeal to those responsible for public administration to give attention, in the distribution of resources, to the sectors of education and health with sums of money in accord with the basic necessities of the population. In that way, the just protests of teachers and students, shanty-town dwellers and those living in the periphery areas, will be duly attended to.
44. Another sector which demands significant attention is the rural population. It lacks the support of an infrastructure of social welfare, of health services, of basic sanitation. These provisions, plus adequate technical assistance for agricultural tasks, will contribute for an honorable and productive permanence of people in the rural areas.
45. Finally, an effort should be made to support and motivate grass-root movements and others who are engaged in the noble struggle for justice.

Reference: INFO ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, February-March 1981, Vol. 8, No.2/3.