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In this issue: One person's story can illustrate vividly the challenges which missionaries meet as they try to share the deep experience of God's love in their lives. Telling one's story is always a risk. It leaves one vulnerable. Fr. B. Holmes takes this risk in sharing with his confreres the experience of his first ten years in Brazil. Telling one's story demands objectivity in reporting, analysis of what is happening and awareness of subjective involvement when making choices, the motivations for which are extremely complicated.

Inevitably, Fr. Holmes comes to the question, "Is all this pastoral activity?" "Is it the mission of the church"? The story of his Ten Year Journey will be concluded in the next issue of the Bulletin.

The emphasis given by John Paul II to the dignity of the human person has helped to inspire the Zairean Bishops' beautiful synthesis in the first part of their letter "Man, the Image of God". We include it here for its special relevance to relations between Christians and peoples of other religions.

Rosemary Haughton's essay continues. Robert Schreiter deals as an academic theologian with the same problems and opportunities that concern Fr. Holmes and Rosemary Haughton. "Perhaps the single greatest challenge to contextual theology", he writes, "is the rapid urbanization of the planet."

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COMING EVENTS

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A TEN YEAR JOURNEY
OUTLINE OF AN ANALYSIS

B. Holmes, CSsR.

(Translated from the Portuguese by Gema Garcia Mortell).

(Voici la première partie du compte rendu destiné à ses confrères Rédemptoristes sur les dix années de mission au Brésil du P. Holmes. Il décrit ses efforts pour répondre aux diverses situations auxquelles il s'est trouvé mêlé et nécessairement il s'interroge lui-même: "Tout cela est-il vraiment une activité pastorale? Est-ce la mission de l'Eglise ou est-ce seulement une campagne politique ou syndicale utilisant l'Eglise pour parvenir à des changements socio-économiques?" La question angoissante vint à la suite de la campagne syndicale de 1979 qui aboutit à des élections de délégués des communautés de bases, élections déclarées invalides par la suite. Il fallut alors lancer une nouvelle campagne...)

1. MOTIVATION

I arrived in Goias (Brazil) at the beginning of 1971. Ricardo, William and I tried to get serious work going, -still very much linked with the rest of the Prelacy. The work, for me, was full of novelty and adventure: the 'desobrigas' on horseback, a whole month riding around the fazendas of Lizarda and Pedro Afonso; the journeys by river, admiring the ever-varied beauty of the colossal Tocantins; plunging into the life of a small and monotonous town like Pedro Afonso; the struggle to teach religion in the College there. (This last was such an inglorious struggle that I remember the happiness I felt one morning when Ricardo asked me to unblock the cesspit behind the parish house. I chose to spend the morning fighting the filth and the stench, rather than face teaching religion in the College).

I remember the decision I made while travelling to Pedro Afonso: in the first year I will start nothing new. I will simply insinuate myself into the reality of local life, doing everything as it has always been done. I will observe and, in the light of the findings, try to discover the course of action for the second and subsequent years.

Only there never was a second year. The questions which began to raise their heads had to remain theoretical issues. For instance: What is life like on the fazenda? What really is the relationship (in socio-economic and personal terms) between Benedito Botelho and his herdsmen and farmlands? Should we continue the 'desobrigas' in the municipality of Lizarda, adding prestige to the Bezerra family by visiting their houses and celebrating Mass there? Mauricio, the guide, would answer: "But, Father, if you don't offer Mass in the rich man's house, the poor will not come. No poor person is in a position to slaughter a cow and twenty chickens to feed everyone on the day of the Mass.." Who was it that said once that the economic angle is basic in every society?

I repeat: they were good times. But then there was the Chapter in Miracema in 1972. In view of the general concern expressed there about vocations, and the apparent failure of every attempt up till then to find a workable solution, I was asked to dedicate myself to the job. It was a difficult job; nevertheless, because of the confidence everybody shared in me, I took it on enthusiastically.

I came to Fortaleza, in the North East. Thus began a series of contact which expanded my horizons in respect of the pastoral ministry, the Church, the mission of the Christian, the work for vocations, and the Congregation. This enlargement of vision (for such, I hope, it was) came about mainly through:

- visits to local Churches in three States
- contact with different experiments in the pastoral ministry.
- the earnest quest, almost anguished, of the confreres
- involvement in the North East 1 Region of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB).
- attendance at National Meetings of the CNBB on the subject of Vocations, finding out about the experiences of other (Redemptorist) Provinces;
- the forward march of the Churches and the stands they took: 1973, for instance, was the Year of the Marginalized People in Goias and, in the North East, "I heard the cry of my People" was the theme.

All this, of course, was very much influenced by events in the country itself: the hardening of the dictatorial regime, the growing suppression of the people, the breaking down of all the means of organizing and articulating the people's struggle (political parties, trade unions, associations, etc.)

I realized more and more clearly that our problem with vocations was integrally bound up with the problem of the Church in Brazil and especially in our area. And that a separate solution, isolated from this Church, would be false and inadequate. The intuition grew more and more that the way out of the vocations problem was within and through the greater way out for the entire pastoral ministry. It was as if a great building was in danger of collapsing and trying to stabilize itself, and we had a small flat in it. It was useless trying to tidy up our little corner without looking at, worrying about and fighting for the whole building. It was no use trying to mend old clothes with new patches. We were at a crossroads, a crucial moment in history, a kairos. EITHER we look ahead boldly and with courage, taking risks in this confused Church, sacrificing ourselves with the Church for the people, trusting that the Spirit will give birth to new forms of ministry and of religious life, with communities of faith emerging and multiplying everywhere. OR we look back, to past experience, to how things work in Sao Paulo and in Ireland, to how we are going to form new Redemptorists in the traditional moulds in order to give continuity to our work.

I was convinced then (and am even more so today) of the need to shatter the old moulds and to break new ground in the search for quite different solutions. Deep down inside I felt a desire to return and use the most ancient mould of all: the experience of primitive Christianity. Because the structures we have today were worked out for another time. another climate, other needs. They were more or less useful. But to want to perpetuate them, as immutable and sacred, is to deny the ever-innovating Spirit of Christ and the thrust of history itself.

With all this simmering within me, after hours of conversation and debate and analysis by the communities (in one of which someone described me as a 'red hot poker'), I felt more and more that I was talking about something that did not exist. My words were hollow, empty theory. I felt the need to live all this in a more coherent fashion. I asked the Vice-Provincial Council for permission to spend some time in the Diocese of Crateus. This was one of the Churches which was trying to define itself, to become engaged, to concretize this entire search.

I was given permission to do so (this is important because people, every so often, would ask me 'When do you intend going back to the Congregation?' as if I were a fugitive or a renegade). On Ash Wednesday 1974 I took the Rapido Crateus bus. I will not go into all the details of how I managed to convince Bishop Fragoso to allow me to go there. Only that his eventually opening the door to me was a mark of solidarity and a positive gesture in the face of the imprisonment of Eliesiu and Luizinha in September 1973. I entered the Diocese under fire. Officially I was received as a representative of the NE 1 Region of the CNBB with the goal of looking at and reflecting on the work for vocations and to study the new ministries emerging from the heart of the communities as a tentative response to an old problem.

2. ACTION: DIOCESE OF CRATEUS, 1974-80

a) A period of new contacts: Taua - four months of floods. I spent the first few days in Taua. Affredinho, the parish priest, had to visit his mother and colleagues in France. I stayed there during his absence. Not to replace him, but to get to know more closely all the effort of the local team to encourage the birth of many basic communities. It was at the time when Ceara was submerged beneath the floodwaters. Thus Taua, the capital of the 'drought polygon' found itself under an immense sea of water. But this did not stop the work of the parochial team. Because they always went on foot to visit the communities, the blocked roads, broken bridges and swamps were not obstacles.

I entered into the hard slog, walking, seeing, feeling and learning. The judgement of the people on the floods was clear and critical: 'In the drought of 1972, when the government gave us work building dams in the fazendas of the rich, they did not pay us the minimum (legal) salary. These floods are a punishment from God so that they might learn not to cheat the poor'.

In fact, in a single night in one district 150 dams were carried away by the torrential rains. I began to realize all the iniquity involved in the system of ownership and use of the land, all the slavery hidden in the seemingly patriarchal and often paternalistic relationship style of the big landowner. I learned all about the mechanisms in force for exploiting the workers: leases, half-shares, rent-by-tasks, employer's vouchers, loans, captive days, and so on.

I saw in the work of the parish team an incredible effort: to animate faith, to catechise, to administer the parish, to bring about a more critical awareness of reality, an effort to make the trade union an instrument for the defence of rights. I saw, too, the mistrust, anger, sense of persecution of the landed classes, who felt threatened by this work only then beginning.

There was constant mention of Padre Se, an Italian priest, who was expelled from the parish and the country in 1972. And everybody knew why: 'He spoke on behalf of the poor'.

b) Following this baptism in the water and mud of Taua, I spent six months visiting the nine other parishes of the diocese in order to acquire an overall vision. Each parish had its own style, some going without a resident parish priest, with the animation of the pastoral work taken over by lay people or nuns. Other parishes were more problematic. One or two were like parishes from the days of the Council of Trent. Despite the effort made by the diocese to get everyone moving in the same direction, as well as the sense of urgency experienced in the meetings and debates of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, there was also a great tolerance for those who did not want to join in. I sometimes thought that the Bishop was too soft and too tolerant. But six months was enough for me to discover that the real life of the diocese could not be easily seen. It could not be discovered, studied or examined in a short time. The real life was scattered among the communities, many of them isolated, inaccessible and distant. This made me want to concentrate on a more specific area.

c) In October 1974 I went to Poranga, to be the parish priest and to work in the team there with Sr. Lemos and Luizinha. Poranga had been the scene of brutal and ignorant repression by the federal police in 1973, culminating in the imprisonment of four rural workers as well as Luizinha and Eliesio. The impact on the community work of the parish was great. Poranga is in the hills, a suffering periphery of an area itself peripheral and long-suffering. It is a small parish, the work slow and patient, with little future in human terms. Along with Luizinha and Lemos, learning much with them, we resumed the work. It was a good year. Because it was a small parish there was time for everything: to live with the people, time to read and meditate, to pray together, to work (I planted a sand-bank with grass for the donkeys and cassava for ourselves), to reflect on the ministries and to encourage this reflection in the diocese, to visit my companions in the other parishes, to spend time with the confreres. During this period two pamphlets reflecting on the ministries were born (or aborted). But they did not arouse much enthusiasm either in the diocese or the vice-province. Just as well...

d) From Poranga to Taua was a big step. From the outskirts of the diocese, from a more or less tranquil - if demanding - life, from my flourishing sand-bank to a more tense, hard, talked-about area, the Inhamuns. 50,000 inhabitants, 16,000 in the town and the rest scattered over an area of more than 4,000 square kilometres of scrubland and hills. It was the land of the Feitosa family with their huge estates, the land of Government Projects, of repeated droughts, a land where struggle and tension were constant, and where now the basic communities flourished, were born and died all the time, and needed the constant presence of the missionary to follow-up everything with superhuman effort.

It was felt that in the parish of Taua there was enormous energy, an exploding and overflowing life which lacked only a little organization to transform this energy and life into concrete and effective action. The task entrusted to me by the Diocesan Pastoral Council was just that: together with the parochial team to try and find out how best to channel this life and energy.

Again it was a task of getting in touch with reality. It was a hard and demanding year for both myself and the parish team. Often I felt lost, not knowing how to help, to guide, to reflect. I was expected to continue what was already there, but unlike Vandred (a popular song-writer), 'I am lazy and do not plant anything. I choose to be silent and to hear everything along the journey'. At the end of the first year we managed to determine the way ahead. We would dedicate our attention to the problem of the rural worker. This would be the foundation, the point of reference, the touchstone of the entire effort.

We justified our position thus: evangelically, the rural worker was the poorest, the most exploited, and marginalized. Demographically, he was the great majority of the population. And, strategically, he was the working class with potential for revolution and the objective conditions to provoke social change.

With this touchstone firmly established, we continued the journey, focussing on the problems experienced by the people, - the injustices, the struggle to defend their rights. In the communities there began to develop an increasingly critical awareness of reality, especially among the 'animators'. Every two months the more aware and militant animators would meet to talk about their struggles and to reflect upon the profound meaning of their activity, - in terms of their faith/mission and of political action. There were many small fights in specific areas, but we quickly realized that without a wider organization all our efforts were merely palliatives.

The Rural Workers Trade Union, founded in 1968 (encouraged a little by the diocese), had been quickly emasculated and manipulated by the local political/economic powers. We decided to remove the Trade Union from the hands of the landowners and politicians. And because of this confrontation with wider powers, both local and federal (the Minister of Labour intervened to annul the first election victory of the workers), there developed an awareness of the need for a political organization which would represent and defend the interests of the working class.

Much of the journey was not very peaceful. There was a lot of conflict. As well as the smaller struggles by individuals and communities, - for a school, a chapel, a well, a road, a pension for an elderly or sick friend, a water-supply for a district, a lease, compensation for damage done by the landowner's cattle invading a cornfield, preventing an eviction, and so on, there were the great campaigns embracing the whole area and which encouraged militancy in the communities.

1975: The Army, asphaltting the federal highway BRO 20, ordered the destruction of 120 houses which had been built on land given to the poor by the Army in 1970. It was a year of struggle to find a solution in favour of the people, and still continues.

1976: Widespread drought: a lot of work was done to get the communities organized, to assess the losses and to demand emergency work, and afterwards to support the men on the work-fronts which the government had to open up.

1977: Problems arose in Vareza de Boi where the tenants of the irrigation scheme run by the National Department of Works against the Drought (DNOCS) stood up to repression by DNOCS involving theft, invasion of the tenants' houses, interrogation and imprisonment. At first discretely but, later on, more openly I kept an eye on events, so that the parish too began to suffer oppression.

1978: The campaign against DNOCS became a juridical one with three appeals to the Federal Court of Justice. I had to keep in touch with these, keep up the spirits of the tenants, keep the communities informed, organize the resistance by means of concrete support to the communities, write press releases, and so on.

1979: The Trade Union campaign ended with the election of our Opposition slate and the defeat of the slates representing both wings of the local Arena (Government) Party. When these elections were declared invalid, the communities had to be mobilized once again for the new election.

1980: The new election....the campaign goes on.

At this stage the reader may well ask: "Is all this pastoral activity? Is it missionary of the Church, or is it agitation, a political and trade-union campaign, using the church in order to provoke socio-economic change?" At times I have asked myself the same question. But the answer is clear. For 500 years the church served the interests of the dominant classes. In Taua itself she identified herself with the interests of these classes since the days when the land was taken from the original inhabitants (the Inhamuns Indians), when the Indians were 'domesticated', the negroes enslaved, and the landless exploited by the landowners.

The parish church in Taua (more like a fortress than a church, I wonder why?), was built by slaves working under the whip of the Feitosa family. At the end of the last century the Parish Priest acquired 'a female slave, 22 years old, called Beatriz, in exchange for a farm with a value of twenty fat cows'.

Today we can see more clearly that the institutional Church, by identifying herself with a sinful socio-economic system, betrayed the kingdom of God. I can see clearly today how the present social system is equally sinful and diabolical. And the more capitalism infiltrates the countryside, the more diabolical it becomes. And we Christians, what is our stand where capitalism is concerned? We cannot remain neutral. For those who remain neutral are supporting, accepting and blessing it. There is only one way out for the Christian: to campaign against it, to denounce it, to combat it, not only with words but also with concrete, effective trade-union and political action.

History will judge whether the action was effective or not. But the intention, at least, was clear: to reject this way of organizing men's lives and to struggle to create a different, more human and fraternal way, in which men would no longer be exploited or exploit. To fight for this vision of man is for me to be a Christian, it is to fight for the Kingdom of God on earth. To seek to be neutral, to look after one's spiritual life, to be on the side of the oppressors and the oppressed at the same time, is to collude, to be silent, to pass by on the other side; it is to refuse to love. Because all this struggle for a new world, for a radical change in society, for a socialism that generates the authentic conditions for men to live together as brothers, all this is an act of love.

I hope that I have not given the impression so far that I faced everything and did it all on my own. I have no illusions. The journey was marked by several factors without which things would have been very different. For instance:

- The progress of the peoples' campaigns, in the towns and in the country, the reorganization of the Opposition and its significant victories, the relaxing of the dictatorship brought about by the failure of its politico-economic model and the demands of the people; these were all very significant.

- The long-term work of the diocese (since 1964), the activities carried on in Taua by various people and especially the parish team, a group of local laypeople who have undertaken the task with heroism and dedication.

- The joint work with other parishes, all in the same search, going in the same direction, reflecting, criticizing, assessing, helping each other in crucial moments.

- The support of outside friends, many of whom did not consider themselves Christians, who as friends and professionals (sociologists, economists, lawyers) gave a lot of their time supporting us, observing, questioning, advising, and always without charge. By simply believing in the cause of a free people in a land free of exploitation, they were very much present on this journey, never imposing their own ideas or ideologies, but always in a climate of dialogue and friendship and interest in the progress of the peoples' liberation and growth.

- The many confreres who visited, gave support, friendship and solidarity during all these years and who never failed to show interest or to give concrete support.

But to be really honest, what sustained and encouraged me on this journey most was the courage of the people. Often when I was sad, disappointed because of something trivial or something more serious, it was enough to visit the communities and meet the men, the women and the young people and their life, their courage, their availability and their hope in a better future rapidly dissipated and relativised my momentary lows.

- To be continued -

Reference: SEARCH, No.12, 1981, A magazine for and about Redemptorists of the Irish Province.

HOMME, IMAGE DE DIEU

(Extrait de la Déclaration du Comité Permanent des Evêques du Zaïre, "Notre Foi en l'Homme Image de Dieu", Juin 1981).

(In this first part of their Declaration the Bishops of Zaïre draw mainly on the Scriptures, Gaudium et Spes and Redemptor Hominis and present a short but beautiful synthesis on the dignity of man. They remind all disciples of Christ and all people of good will of the need to ensure that men and women, made in the image of God, are always given their rightful and central place in all projects involving society. Ed).

2...L'identification fondamentale de Jésus à ses disciples rappelle celle de Dieu à l'homme. Elle remonte au mystère même de la création où, après avoir propulsé l'univers dans l'existence, l'Eternel le confie à la garde et à la créativité d'un autre lui-même, de celui qu'il fit "à peine moindre qu'un Dieu".

*"Dieu créa l'homme à son image,
à l'image de Dieu il le créa;
mâle et femelle il les créa (Gn. 1,27)(4) .*

Il fit de l'homme "presque un dieu", le couronnant" de gloire et d'éclat" pour le faire "régner sur l'oeuvre de (ses) mains" (Ps. 8,6-7; Cf. Gn.1,28).

Tu "as formé l'homme par ta sagesse afin qu'il domine sur les créatures appelées par toi à l'existence, qu'il gouverne le monde avec piété et justice..."(Sg. 9,2-3).

3. Ce mystère de l'homme image de Dieu et Seigneur de l'univers s'approfondit encore plus à la lumière du mystère du Verbe incarné (5).

C'est celui-ci qui est "l'image du Dieu invisible" (Col. 1,15). Ruisselant de beauté, il est, comme Fils "resplendissement de (la) gloire" du Père et "expression de son être" (He 1,3; cf. II Co., 4,4). Par là, il est l'image par excellence, à un titre unique, incréé. De sorte que le mortel n'est image de Dieu qu'en étant image du Fils, "reproduction" de l'image du Fils. Car "ceux que d'avance il a connus, il les a aussi prédestinés à être conformes à l'image de son Fils, afin que celui-ci soit le premier-né d'une multitude de frères"(Rm. 8,29).

En d'autres mots, le propos de Dieu dans la création de l'homme apparaît comme celui de se donner "une multitude" de fils, reproduction de l'image du Fils unique engendré et non pas créé. Des fils dans le Fils: "Il nous a prédestinés à être pour lui des fils adoptifs par Jésus Christ; ainsi l'a voulu sa bienveillance à la louange de sa gloire et de la grâce dont il nous a comblés en son Bien-aimé" (Ep. 1,5-6). Image du Fils, image et fils; frère du Fils; donc héritier, son cohéritier (cf. Rm. 8,17). Le propos de Dieu est donc, fondamentalement, un propos d'amour. Amour radical, primordial, antérieur à son objet et qui fait exister ce dernier et le sustente dans l'être. Selon ce mot du livre de la Sagesse:

(4) Cf. Gn.9, 6; Sg. 2.23, (5) Cf. Gaudium et Spes, n.22 Q 1.

"Tu aimes tous les êtres et ne détestes aucune de tes œuvres: aurais-tu haï l'une d'elles, tu ne l'aurais pas créée. Et comment un être quelconque aurait-il subsisté si toi, tu ne l'avais voulu, ou aurait-il été conservé sans avoir été appelé par toi. Tu les épargnes tous, car ils sont à toi. Maître qui aimes la vie, ton esprit incorruptible est dans tous les êtres". (Sg. 11, 24-12,1).

4. Mais l'incarnation du Verbe éclaire encore le mystère de l'homme selon une autre dimension qui rapproche encore davantage l'Ainé de ses innombrables frères, solidarité et partage. Dieu "n'a pas créé l'homme solitaire: dès l'origine, "il les créa homme et femme" (Gn. 1,27).

Cette société de l'homme et de la femme est l'expression première de la communion des personnes. Car l'homme, de par sa nature profonde, est un être social, et, sans relations avec autrui, il ne peut ni vivre ni épanouir ses qualités" (6). Il y a ainsi "une certaine ressemblance entre l'union des personnes divines et celle des fils de Dieu dans la vérité et dans l'amour. Cette ressemblance montre bien que l'homme, seule créature sur terre que Dieu a voulue pour elle-même, ne peut pleinement se trouver que par le don désintéressé de lui-même (7).

5. L'exemple de ce don radical de soi-même aux autres, poussé jusqu'à l'extrême du dépouillement de soi, c'est encore le Verbe qui nous le fournit dans son incarnation. Lui qui,

"de condition divine n'a pas considéré comme une proie à saisir d'être l'égal de Dieu.

Mais il s'est dépouillé, prenant la condition de serviteur, devenant semblable aux hommes, et, reconnu à son aspect comme un homme; il s'est abaissé, devenant obéissant jusqu'à la mort, à la mort sur une croix.

C'est pourquoi Dieu l'a souverainement élevé et lui a conféré le Nom qui est au-dessus de tout nom, afin qu'au nom de Jésus tout genou fléchisse, dans les cieux, sur la terre et sous la terre, et que toute langue confesse que le Seigneur, c'est Jésus-Christ, à la gloire de Dieu le Père" (Ph. 2,6-11).

Cet hymne synthétise le mouvement même selon lequel s'articulent les différents mystères du Christ: sa condition divine préalable, sa kénose ou son dépouillement dans l'incarnation, sa mort d'esclave sur une croix et son exaltation au terme de ce processus d'abaissement. Mouvement commandé par une folie d'amour pour ses innombrables frères, ceux que le Père lui a donnés et qu'"il ne rougit pas d'appeler 'frères'" (Cf. He. 2, 11-13).

6. Sa solidarité avec eux le pousse à partager ce qu'ils ont en commun, à savoir "le sang et la chair". Lui aussi "partagea la même condition, afin de réduire à l'impuissance, par sa mort, celui qui détenait le pouvoir de la mort, et de délivrer ceux qui, par crainte de la mort, passaient toute leur vie dans une situation d'esclaves... Aussi devait-il en tous points se faire semblable à ses frères, afin de devenir un grand prêtre miséricordieux en même temps qu'accrédité auprès de Dieu pour effacer les péchés du peuple" (He. 2, 14-17).

(6) Ibid. n.12, Q 4.

(7) Ibid. n.24, Q 3.

Le Christ, en tant que semblable à ses frères, hormis le péché (He.4-5) dont il avait à les libérer, a aimé les siens "jusqu'au bout" (Jn 13, 1). Et l'amour appelle l'amour.

7. C'est pourquoi le message sur l'homme "image de Dieu" resterait incomplet inachevé, si l'image et la ressemblance au plan de l'être n'avaient aucun déploiement au plan éthique, aucun retentissement existentiel amenant les mortels à agir à la manière de Dieu, à éprouver en eux les mêmes sentiments qui furent ceux de Dieu dans le Christ (Cf. Ph. 2,5). Et ces sentiments sont fondamentalement synthétisés dans le mot "amour", définition dynamique de Dieu (I Jn. 4,8) et nouveau commandement de l'humanité régénérée dans le Christ et signe distinctif des disciples: "Je vous donne un commandement nouveau: aimez-vous les uns les autres comme je vous ai aimés. A ceci tous vous reconnaîtront pour mes disciples: à l'amour que vous aurez les uns pour les autres" (Jn. 13,34-35).

8. Ainsi, "si quelqu'un dit: 'J'aime Dieu', et qu'il haisse son frère, c'est un menteur. En effet, celui qui n'aime pas son frère, qu'il voit, ne peut aimer Dieu qu'il ne voit pas" (I Jn.4, 20). Et encore: "Quiconque hait son frère est un meurtrier. Et, vous le savez, aucun meurtrier n'a la vie éternelle demeurant en lui" (I Jn. 3, 15). Les disciples doivent mener une existence conforme à l'appel inscrit dans leur être et dans leurs engagements historiques du baptême. Une vie sans cesse convertie, tournée vers le modèle que nous a laissé le Christ. "Soyez parfaits comme votre Père céleste est parfait" (Cf. Mt. 5,48) (8).

9. Non seulement l'amour pour l'homme est un signe de l'amour pour Dieu, mais on ne peut rejoindre Dieu qu'en passant par l'homme comme par "une route" obligée. Oui, l'homme "est la route de l'Eglise, route qui se déploie, d'une certaine façon, à la base de toutes les routes que l'Eglise doit emprunter, parce que l'homme--tout homme sans exception--a été racheté par le Christ, parce que le Christ est en quelque sorte uni à l'homme, à chaque homme sans aucune exception, même si ce dernier n'en est pas conscient..." Oui, l'homme est "la route de l'Eglise, route de sa vie et de son expérience quotidiennes, de sa mission et de son labeur". Ce qui veut dire que "l'Eglise de notre temps doit être, de façon toujours universelle, consciente de la situation de l'homme" (9).

10. Le Christ lui-même s'est identifié à l'homme, à tout homme, au pauvre surtout. Au dernier jugement, chacun comprendra cet enseignement et ses exigences, selon l'évangile de St. Matthieu:

*"J'ai eu faim et vous m'avez donné à manger;
j'ai eu soif et vous m'avez donné à boire;
j'étais étranger et vous m'avez accueilli;
j'étais nu et vous m'avez vêtu, j'étais malade et
vous m'avez visité; j'étais en prison et vous êtes
venu vers moi...chaque fois que vous l'avez fait à
l'un de ces plus petits, qui sont mes frères, c'est
à moi que vous l'avez fait (Mt. 25, 34-36, 40).*

(8) Cf. "Tous solidaires et responsables." Lettre pastorale des Evêques du Zaïre lors de la 13ème Assemblée Plénière, Kinshasa, 1977, p. 11.

(9) Redemptor Hominis, n.14 : 3-4.

1. A l'exemple de Dieu, il faut situer l'homme au-dessus des autres créatures en ce monde. Malgré nos propres insuffisances, nous invitons tous les disciples du Christ comme tous les hommes de bonne volonté à redonner à l'homme sa place centrale dans tous les projets de société

"Nous désirons la paix et travaillons à son avènement, mais dans la justice, la dignité et la liberté. L'homme est sacré, il est lieu de Dieu et nul ne peut en faire son repoussoir, sa cire molle ou sa brebis d'abattoir" (10).

Reference: "Notre Foi en L'Homme Image de Dieu". Edition du Secrétariat Général de l'Episcopat - B.P. 3258 - Kinshasa/Gombe 1981.

- fin -

THERE IS HOPE FOR A TPEE

Rosemary Haughton

(Suite des idées de Rosemary Haughton sur les caractéristiques de l'Eglise en devenir. Parmi celles-ci, elle insiste sur le caractère missionnaire. C'est la tâche du messager, du missionnaire, comme ce fut celle de Pierre, non seulement de faire prendre conscience du Christ à des individus, mais bien plus tôt, (et comme d'un moyen) d'aider la communauté en tant que telle à prendre conscience d'elle-même comme lieu où l'Esprit de Dieu est à l'oeuvre.)

"WHEREVER THEY DO NOT RECEIVE YOU..."

Masculine and feminine ways of being human: In a sense, all we can say now about the proper activities of the new churches is that they should evolve surely and rapidly on that model. They must, for instance, strive to be churches in which, for the first time, the masculine and feminine ways of being human, the two ways in which the divine life is experienced, will be able to complement and perfect each other. In our time it has become possible for the exchange of these two ways of being to be more conscious and richer, though the struggles to bring it to consciousness have made it hard to perceive the fact that it was not women as such, but primarily the feminine aspect of all human life, (as balance, not rival) which was being rescued from dangerous and destructive seclusion.

In these small churches of the poor in spirit, ministry is being rediscovered and gradually articulated in new ways, responding to concrete needs, as in the beginning. In this, both men and women discover new roles and learn to share roles, but naturally enough there is a very special and irreplaceable role for women in all this, which some are beginning to discover, with a certain fear, as well as with gratitude.

(10) Mgr. Kaseba, Allocution à Son Eminence le Cardinal Hoffner, le 2 juin 1981, à Kinshasa.

A Church of friends: Another sticky aspect of the business of 'roles' in the church has to do with the shift from a church in which roles were structured in a parent-child relationship between clergy (and some of their helpers) and laity, to one of a partnership which can include concepts of proper leadership but not of dominance. A church of 'friends' (John, 15:12-17) is what seems to be emerging, and this has to be thought about in terms of appropriate structural expression. But the 'hang-ups' of the older way of relating are very durable, and cannot be dismissed simply because they are no longer useful. Human beings are not like that.

The political role: Another area of need is the political one. One of the earliest and inevitable conflicts of loyalty for Christians concerned the propriety of their involvement in secular structures (especially military ones) and the church has been wrestling with this ever since. The question is now more acute than ever before, more especially since many so-called 'church' structures are in fact 'secular' not only in type of work (e.g. teaching, medicine) but in underlying ideology and moral direction.

This is an area where discernment has to be radical and 'super-natural' in the extreme. It is important to recognize that many of the new pre-churches and churches have come into being in revulsion at the involvement of the 'old' church in structures which are inherently (even if not always obviously or visibly) corrupt and de-humanizing. The very existence of new churches growing from such a revulsion should indicate to us what the Spirit is telling us about the kind of activity which really does spring from living the gospel as mission, and about that which is ineradicably opposed to true dependence on God, to genuine love and hope. We need to ask real (not rhetorical) questions about the possibility of growth in Christ in, among others, academic establishments (however 'religious'), and official medical structures.

Stay or get out, a radical challenge: All this arises not because learning, healing and politics (let alone agriculture!) are irrelevant to faith. On the contrary, it is because they are so deeply important that the only way these human concerns can explicitly and clearly 'say' that Christ is what they are about is to allow them to emerge 'organically' from converted-consciousness, in ways appropriate to that--usually small ones, but many of them. Jesus told us to leave places where the gospel was not accepted. We have to take this often repeated command seriously. It may seem folly--but the results are real life and growth from the gospel root.

"I AM DOING A NEW THING"

There is no way we can use the gospel to plug the moral gaps in existing structures and ways of life. 'Behold, I am doing a new thing', and this newness is a 'renewal' from the source of it all, that is from the gospel itself, from Jesus as Word. There are no in-between ways. It is not so much that compromise is undesirable, but rather that it simply does not work, and sooner or later (usually sooner) the church which compromises with 'the world' slides into being the world, though it may keep the 'shape' of a church. This has been the most glaring sin of all churches for two thousand years, and it is, in its own way, the 'sin against the Holy Spirit' which is 'unforgivable' because such a church has lost any sense of a need for forgiveness. It 'dies', though it may seem successful and even socially useful.

eed for discernment: Therefore, one of the most important tasks for the new churches is to engage in a constant and very conscious process of discernment in this area, designed to show how real, concrete human needs are to be met (in political, social, educational, health, etc. areas) in ways which really do grow from 'the mind of Christ'. This requires patience, because it is bound to be comparatively slow, since so much shedding of false preconceptions is involved.

Neighbourhood schemes: Little neighborhood health-care schemes, cooperative 'block' buying, self-help centers and neighborhood schools, 'urban homesteads' and similar things are not spectacular but they are effective and can be repeated elsewhere by any group with the determination to do it. However, there is a price to be paid: up until recently, such things were so small and few as to constitute no threat to those who need to keep people powerless and isolated--whether it be the Mafia or the firm or the government. There are signs that the growth of dynamic and effective 'grass-roots' self-help has in some places reached proportions which scare those in power, and an attempt at 'clamp down' is gathering force. But persecution is not a new experience for the church.

"HEAR, O ISRAEL..."

Perhaps one may give the answer to the question of this section in the words of Jesus himself, in the 'two great commandments'. To love God, and to love people in him, is to discover the proper way to be and act as the Body of Christ in mission; for the love of God--which is the very Exchange of being in the Three-in-One, the one ultimate reality--is to be given and received through all creation, since that is its nature. Theologically, love must be 'in mission'. When it ceases to be 'sent', it ceases to be love.

Church in mission: The church-in-mission is not an optional extra, a response to particular needs. It is a response to need, but the need is there in the church itself as well as in the 'outside' situation. The church came into existence in order to spread the good news; its missionary nature is not accidental but essential, reflecting the essentially 'out-poured' nature of the divine love which is its life. There must be a strong and clear awareness of this all through the earlier stages of development; in fact, it can happen that the urge to mission is the way in which a church discovers itself as such,

"GO TEACH ALL NATIONS"

Such a need for mission does not absolutely require that people go away from the locality. The new growth and venture may take the form of undertaking some new work in the area, but something demanding and different, breaking new ground. This has the same effect as the kind of mission which involves 'sending' people away to work with the poor, to farm marginal land, to work at political or social issues, or in the third world. This effect is not only that the Spirit in that church is newly active and evident in those who actually carry out the mission, but that it is felt as a renewal of hope and determination in the whole of the 'parent' church. For this it is important that the church send its best and most valuable members.

CHAPTER VIII. 'THERE IS HOPE FOR A TREE...'

Drawing all this together, we can perhaps perceive more clearly the present situation for Christians, and what it demands, concretely and in detail.

A new Church is emerging: The situation is that the new church is clearly emerging, and that this work is clearly that of the Spirit, but it is not yet clear just how this will develop, what kind and degree of opposition is likely (most people haven't even realized yet what is happening) or what new styles or symbols of life will express the new forms of the Body of Christ. All we can see at present are little green shoots above the cleared ground, most of them too small for their kind to be clear, or for us to be able to imagine what they will look like when they are larger.

We can't even see how many 'varieties' there may be, though it seems clear that there are many. This is one reason for the need for 'travelling companions' of Jesus, missionaries who can supplement and invigorate the pastoral skills of the local church because they have learned to be aware of imbalance or weakness in ways in which the local church itself cannot be, in the nature of things, since its weakness is itself. The ability to judge, and to assist and correct early growth, as well as to sow the seed, is part of the missionary work, and it is difficult and delicate one. Clumsiness or ignorance can be fatal. Enthusiasm without wisdom is dangerous in such a situation.

"IF ANYONE WOULD BE MY DISCIPLE..."

So, at this time, there are two kinds of things to be done, or rather there is the same thing to be done by two different kinds of people, and therefore to be experienced in different ways.

The thing to be done is to repent and be baptized, that is, to die with Christ and so come with him to resurrection. Much loving sensibility and endless trust and patience are needed by anyone who is called to help pre-church groups toward the moment of challenge and conversion, which may be quiet, apparently slow, and quite unspectacular. The 'angels' whom the Lord sends to them do not always come in visions. More often, they come to help with whatever work is going on, whether it be building a house or giving a retreat or counselling battered wives or setting up a local literacy program or campaigning against nuclear power. They pray with and for the people involved, bear witness in whatever way is possible, and so, quite unequivocally, make clear the presence of Christ as the meaning and end of all that is being done, there and then.

Called to die: Those who come to 'awareness' do so by knowing themselves as called to die, and so to rise, but it is the dying which comes first and it hurts and there is struggle, and some will run away from such a demand. Sometimes the call to come to a pre-church group is not explicit, as it was to Peter, but only sensed in the articulate desires of the gathered 'pre-church' community. But it is the work of the messenger, as it was for Peter, not just to bring individuals to awareness of Christ but rather (as the means to this) to help the community, as a community, to become aware of itself as the place where God's spirit is at work. This is what draws them together and empowers them, and in this they are called to affirm their identity as Christ, being each of them members of him.

So this is not the 'usual' process of trying to convert people; it is evangelization as it happened in the New Testament church, in the public preaching, but most of all by the 'gossip's gospel!' It is being present as Christ, and so assisting in any way that seems possible, the emergence to consciousness of awareness of Christ present in the group.

- To be concluded -

ISSUES FACING CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGIES TODAY

Robert J. Schreiter, cpps

PART II.

(Schreiter, un professeur de théologie attire l'attention sur les mêmes problèmes rencontrés par Haughton et Holmes dont il est question dans ce numéro. Comment l'Eglise locale et sa théologie se réfèrent-elles à l'Eglise universelle? Comment constituer un cadre pour l'usage légitime de la tradition tandis que les formes de la vie chrétienne perdent leur caractère étranger et s'incarnent de plus en plus dans leurs propres cultures? Comment respecter les théologies qui persistent malgré tout et la religiosité populaire qui nous font comprendre que la religion est une manière de vivre; que les pratiques "superficielles" ne sont pas si superficielles que cela; que la pratique religieuse est souvent liée à une classe sociale. Et comment alors former la nouvelle génération des chefs de l'Eglise; - une tâche qui vient à peine d'être entreprise. ? N.d.l.R.)

THREE: THEORIES OF CULTURE AND THEORIES OF TRADITION

While the new contextual theologies have constantly emphasized the need for concreteness, both in content and in audience, there is an equally strong concern for theory. The social frameworks developed in Anglo-American social sciences in particular have often been forgetful of how implicit theory shapes even inductive and empirical investigation. The assumptions and intentionality of theory need to be brought to consciousness, have their interests identified, so that the limits of their applicability can be ascertained (Habermas 1968).

The contextual theologies have heightened our awareness about being more explicit in our use of theory in two areas: that of cultural analysis, and that of the maintenance and innovation in a tradition.

Cultural analysis: It is one thing to require the analysis of a cultural situation from the perspectives of value, economics, and social relations, and it is another to find an adequate set of methods for doing so. These methods must be available not only to experts, but to a significant part of the total believing community. If analysis is the basis for reflection in the community about its life in Christ, then there must be a set of tools which will be useable within that kind of intentionality.

What theories are the most useful? Many have found the functionalist categories of Anglo-American sociology and anthropology useful, at least at an initial stage. These have been made more available for use for many years now (cf. Luzbetak 1963). But two weaknesses do recur: they are based on a relatively static cultural situation, and they do not handle more complex symbolic relations well.

Functionalist approaches, such as those pioneered by Radcliffe-Brown, Parsons, and Evans-Pritchard (to name but a few), make for good beginnings. But they need some supplementation. The approaches of symbolic anthropologists such as Geertz (1976) can be helpful, especially in his emphasis upon a "thick description" of culture. Some structuralists such as Leach (1977) can also be of use. For dealing with the problems of social change, it seems that Marxian and neo-Marxian models still predominate in the field, and continue to provide the most useable approach.

Maintenance and innovation within a tradition is just beginning to receive more reflection. This is especially a problem in dealing with the previous Christian tradition of which the local community is heir. To put it in other terms; how does the local church and its theology relate to the global Church, and what are the sources and means of legitimizing and verifying its Christian identity?

The question of verification of identity is gone about differently in the various Christian churches, from total concentration on the Scriptures to complex considerations of both the Scriptures and the ensuing tradition. A more adequate theoretical framework for what constitutes legitimating by a tradition needs to be developed as the forms of Christian life lose their foreign character and become more authentically incarnated in their cultures.

What are the criteria for decisions in this area, and how are they to be exercised? When has a point of unacceptable syncretism been reached? How does the basic Christian community relate to the larger Church? What constitutes a praxis in harmony with the faith of the Apostles? These are the theoretical questions lying behind problems of liturgical adaptation, marriage and polygamy questions, issues of church order and polity that keep arising in a variety of contexts. The older work on traditions and the Tradition does not seem to be giving the guidance the communities feel is needed. More certainly needs to be done here.

FOUR: PREVIOUS THEOLOGIES IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Contextual theologies are seldom the first theology in a community. They emerge in communities which have histories of other theologies. These include the theologies of those who evangelized in the culture; the theology of the pastors, learned in seminaries and universities; the folk piety

religiosidad popular) already present in the community. These theologies, too, are a source of identity and distinctiveness for the community, even when they represent an alienating consciousness. This latter phenomenon is especially the case where the Christian community has a minority position in the culture, or where the foreign theology is identified with improving one's status. In these instances, to become Westernized or Christianized is to become different or superior. For example, for some U.S. black persons, becoming Roman Catholic meant leaving the lower-class storefront Church and its emotionalism behind.

Previous theologies in a culture often prove resilient in the face of the newer contextual theologies. They do not immediately fade from the scene when a theology more related to the context appears. This came a bit as a surprise and certainly as a source of frustration in settings where liberation theology was emerging. While the contextual theologies seemed to make more sense, they were sometimes only partially accepted by the community. An unwillingness to adapt the liturgy, to incorporate local customs, to leave folk piety behind, to assume responsibility previously held by an expatriate - these are all familiar symptoms.

Somehow contextual theologies need to take these symptoms more into consideration, since they too form part of the context. To be able to do so, a number of things need to be taken into consideration. I would like to refer to five of them here.

First of all, we need to remember that religion is as much a *way* of life as it is a *view* of life. To change some views will not necessarily bring about a change in ways. The Gospel is more than a set of beliefs, it points out a way as well. The notion of praxis has tried to integrate these realities, but has been more successful in terms of change rather than identity. The Roman Catholic Church, with its sense of ethos as part of its reality, may be in a better position to bring about this sense of identity. In this regard, it seems not coincidental that the notion of a contextually sensitive theology first gathered momentum among Roman Catholics.

Second, surface practices usually reflect deeper phenomena, which have a complex relation to the surface practices. Thus devotion to the Virgin Mary in many Latin American countries cannot be wholly understood on the basis of traditional Mariology. To write off these other relations to the earth, to nationalism, and to power as merely sociological aspects misses an important point. When a religious practice is part and parcel of a way of life, it cannot be changed or integrated into a new reality unless it is viewed holistically.

Third, theologies and religious expression can be tied to a social class. From the beginning, the Church spanned the full range of social classes (Norris 1979), and from the beginning there have been different forms of religious expression. There may be a limited range within which theology and religious expression can be changed within a social class. But what are the boundaries of legitimacy here, as raised for example in questions of rich and poor? How much theology and religious expression can span several or all social classes effectively? While this is the ideal of the Church and of the Kingdom of God, we have never been very successful in the concrete.

Fourth, how are we to respond to folk piety? This is receiving a good deal of consideration at this time, although adequate frameworks still need to be developed. Responses range from disparagement (e.g. Willems 1977), to seeing it as the wisdom of a total culture (Singleton 1978), to hearing it as the voice of an oppressed underclass creating religious expression not under the control of the overlords (Genovese 1974; Guizzardi et al. 1979). Yet we do need to respond to folk piety. To disregard it is to disregard a crucial element of the context; to romantically and uncritically accept it creates its own obvious problems.

Fifth, how will the next generation of church leaders be trained? In too many seminaries in the Third World, textbooks are being used which no longer fit even into the North Atlantic world for which they were intended. In other instances, political conditions have made the use of certain appropriate textbooks dangerous and illegal. Not only is there a question about what materials will be used in training, but also where and how that training takes place.

Do closed seminaries create the very elitism among the people that the vision of the basic Christian community model of Church tries to overcome? What of the relation between the various ministries now part of the Church? Education is a means of socialization, of transmitting values, attitudes and ideals from one generation to the next. What do our materials, means and modes of transmission say about values, attitudes and ideals?

The previous theologies in the context cannot be ignored. They have survived for certain reasons. And without discovering those reasons there is little hope for a newer contextual theology taking their place.

FIVE: FACING URBANIZATION

Perhaps the single greatest challenge to contextual theologies is the rapid urbanization of the planet. Our theology tends to be university-centered; our spirituality, rural or village-centered. But before long a majority of the world's people will be relocated and dislocated in cities far different from the medieval ones.

Theories of Third World urbanization are still sketchy, since grants are more available for study of North Atlantic centers. The history of nineteenth and early twentieth century urbanization of North America and Europe is only partially useful. But even that history tells us how the urban proletariat and middle class tended to drift away from established Christianity, either into sectarian formations (Thompson 1964) or away from religious practice at all.

Pastoral response to this phenomenon is beginning to take shape. The basic Christian community is replacing the massive urban parish in many Latin American urban centers as the basic social unit of Christianity. There have been attempts to address this problem directly in some places (e.g., Seifert 1978) but so much still needs to be done. The North Atlantic Church has not been particularly successful either, even under less adverse circumstances.

CONCLUSION

This survey has attempted to encompass some of the problems which face almost any contextual theology today. There are, of course, many other problems, some of which are taken up by other authors in this number of *Verbum SVD*. But the problems set out here are major ones which must form part of our agenda for the coming years. And these are not only items for the churches of the Third World; they are equally important for the North Atlantic churches as well.

The experience of Third World churches may illumine some of the problems in Europe and North America. Indeed the North Atlantic community needs to exercise the same obedience and asceticism of listening which it exacted from the younger churches in the past. Out of this can grow a genuine mutuality which can only enrich our understanding of the message of Jesus Christ, and lead to the authentic *metanoia* which heralds the Kingdom of God.

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SOME STATISTICS FROM INDIA

On 1-8-1980, only 841 of the 11000 Catholic priests in India were of foreign origin. 357 of them had entered India before India became a republic and 124 are Indian citizens. During the last decade only 23 priests have come to India. Some of them are students at the centres of Indian philosophy and culture.

47%, that is 394 out of the 841 missionaries are above 60 years of age and 23% (184) above 70 years of age. The largest number of missionary priests now living, came from Spain (156), Belgium (146) and Italy (102). The biggest group of these priests (226) work in the most backward State, Bihar. The States with the largest cities come next. Bengal (122) and Maharashtra (112). Most of the disturbed States of the North East have no foreign missionaries. Assam has just two. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura have none.

FOREIGN MISSIONARIES IN INDIA AS ON 1-8-1980

Age-Wise distribution

<u>Born before</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>?</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Priests</u>	23	161	210	273	134	38	2	841
<u>Brothers</u>	2	23	39	40	17	12	3	136

According to the date of entry into India

<u>Before</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>?</u>
<u>Priests</u>	1	6	75	177	198	246	103	23	12
<u>Brothers</u>	-	-	19	29	25	30	18	9	-

Country of origin

	<u>Priests</u>	<u>Brothers</u>		<u>Priests</u>	<u>Brothers</u>
1. Australia	54	4	9. Ireland	27	61
2. Austria	5	-	10. Italy	102	15
3. Belgium	146	3	11. Luxemburg	4	-
4. Canada	42	6	12. Malta	44	4
5. England	19	3	13. Spain	156	16
6. France	59	2	14. Switzerland	22	3
7. Germany	42	7	15. U.S.A.	81	1
8. Holland	31	3	16. Others	17	8

Reference: Catholic India, October 1980.