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In this issue: *A later Special Issue of the Bulletin will deal with the Sedos Seminar on Preparation and Formation for Mission* which was held from 10th to 13th March, 1982. The first article in this issue deals inter alia with inculturation, a topic which received much attention at the Seminar in the context of formation for Mission in the future. It will be continued in the next two issues.

Aloysius Pieris not only raises many questions but offers pointers for their solution, pointers which have relevance beyond the context of the relationship with Asian religions in which he writes.

Yves Morel's analysis of educated youth's attitude to the Church in some countries of West Africa is concluded.

The Spiritans' Generalate Team write to their members on Mission for the Future reflecting aspects of their 1980 Chapter and the "Agenda" drawn up at the 1981 Sedos Research Seminar on Mission for the Future.

We welcome another new member to Sedos - the Consolata Sisters (MC). Please add their name to the list of members in your 1982 Sedos Brochure which had just been printed when the Consolata Sisters' application for membership was received. The number of member societies is now fifty one.

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Coming Events

African Members of International Congregations.	Thursday, 1st April, Borgo S. Spirito from 4 - 6 p.m.
Executive Committee Meeting	Friday, 16th April at 4.00 p.m. Sedos.
Social Analysis - Joint Commission Justice & Peace UISG/USG.	Tuesday, April 27th from 10.00 - 5.30 p.m. at Christian Brothers Generalate, Via Aurelia 476.
Sedos One Day Seminar	Tuesday, May 18th (keep this date open)

No Bulletin for April 15th
Sedos office closed from 7th - 13th April, 1982

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MISSION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IN RELATION
TO OTHER MAJOR RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Aloysius Pieris

(La deuxième partie de l'article d'Aloysius Pieris aborde des problèmes concrets sur les relations entre le christianisme et les religions de l'Asie. Il pose des questions sur l'inculturation et la théologie indigène. Pieris propose aussi quatre mises en garde à ceux qui mettent trop l'accent sur la spiritualité extrême orientale puis il traite des religions asiatiques en relation avec la politique de la pauvreté. N.d.l.R.)

PART II. CONCRETE ISSUES

(A) Inculturation, Indigenous Theology and Oriental Spirituality

Inculturation is something that happens naturally. It can never be artificially induced. A Christian Community tends to appropriate the symbols and the mores of the people around, only to the degree it immerses itself in their lives and struggles. That is to say, inculturation is the by-product of an involvement with the people rather than the conscious target of a programme of action. For it is the people who create a culture. It is, therefore, from people that one understands and acquires a culture.

The questions that are foremost in the minds of inculturationists are, therefore, totally irrelevant; namely, whether a particular Church is inculturated or not, or why it is not inculturated and how it could be inculturated. Yet it is relevant to know why such irrelevant questions are asked so frequently in our local Churches today. Our diagnosis is that the inculturationists are starting off from the observation, valid in itself, that the ecclesiastical culture of the ministerial Church in Asia is elitist and stands aloof from the culture of the poor masses. This cultural gap is even more pronounced in former European colonies such as India, Malaysia or Indo-China, where the seminary training and all clerical communication is done in the language of former colonial masters. But what the inculturationists fail to perceive is that the aforesaid cultural gap has an economic base; that the Church's twofold culture indicates a sociological process in which the class division of the wider society has been ecclesiologicaly registered in the life of the believing community - a sin against the Body of the Lord, as St. Paul would have put it; that the cultures of the clerics represents the dominant sector of the believing Community; and so on.

Moreover, the irrelevance of the above mentioned questions, which is at the centre of the Inculturation debate, is rooted in the erroneous presupposition that Churches in Asia are not inculturated. Every local Church, being itself a people, is essentially an inculturated Church. The relevant question to ask, therefore, is: Whose culture does the official Church reflect? Which is the same as asking: Which class of people is the Church predominantly associated with? Do the poor - the principal addressees of the Good News and the special invitees to Christian discipleship - constitute a culturally decisive factor in the local Church? Thus the whole Inculturation issue derives its significance from the local Church's basic mission to bring - and become - the Good News to the Poor in Asia.

Incidentally, the current discussion on indigenization, if situated in the context of this basic Mission, would require that we review critically the instruments of apostolate most local Churches are using for the training of ministers (i.e. the seminaries) and for the education of the laity (schools, colleges, technological institutes). Are these not the institutions that perpetuate the aforesaid cultural gap by maintaining the class division lying beneath it? Did they not originate at an era when evangelization was restricted to mean a quantitative extension of an already stratified ecclesiastical complex with no idea of the ecclesiological revolution which "evangelization" constantly evokes?

In the contemporary Church, this ecclesiological revolution seems to have begun with the mushrooming of 'basic communities' or 'grass-root communities' or ecclesiolae. In the next section of this paper we shall indicate the specific contribution that Asia offers towards this revolution. Suffice it here merely to record that the growth of such apostolic communes coincides with a re-evangelization of the Church as a whole, the evolution of new ministries and the formation of new ministries within the cultural ethos of the poor, and the re-awakening of the poor themselves to their irreplaceable role in the liberative revolution which Jesus referred to as the Kingdom. One bishop in Sri Lanka has to his credit at least four ministers formed outside the traditional seminary. The second batch has begun training. The present writer too is engaged in a similar project. Indeed, there are a few laboratories of hope where the Christ-experience of the less-privileged gets spontaneously formulated into an indigenous theology.

If, however, this last observation is valid, namely, that an indigenous theology in our context is an articulation of the Christ-experience of Asia's poor, then, neither the clerical leadership of the church nor even the Asian (liberation) Theologians who have been educated in an elitist culture can claim to be the engineers of an indigenous theology. In fact, like the hierarchical Church, these theologians too, speak of the poor in the third person! This is an implicit acknowledgement that they are not really poor. On the other hand the poor have not yet been truly evangelized and they, too, are not, therefore, qualified as yet to spell out an indigenous theology for Asia. No doubt, they have received the seed of liberation from the Gospel and from other religions - the 'positive pole' of religiosity as we named it earlier. To evangelize Asia, in other words is to evoke in the poor this liberative dimension of Asian religiosity, Christian and non-Christian. For, the unevangelized poor tend to reduce religion to an opiate, to struggle without hope and to submit too easily to the religious domination of the elite class.

The Asian dilemma, then, can be summed up as follows: the Theologians are not (yet) poor; and the poor are not (yet) theologians! This dilemma can be resolved only in the local Churches of Asia, i.e. in the grass roots communities where the theologians and the poor become culturally reconciled through a process of mutual evangelization.

This reciprocal exposure to the Gospel consists in that the Theologians are awakened into the liberative dimension of "poverty" and the poor conscientized into the liberative potentialities of their "religiosity". Thus if there is any model of a local Church for Asians it should be in those Asian communities where the positive poles of religiosity and poverty merge; and such communities do exist in Asia outside the Christian Churches and to these we shall turn our attention in the next section of this paper.

This said, I consider it a waste of time even to comment on the efforts of those scholars who employ their knowledge of ancient religious texts to build up conceptual frameworks for an 'indigenous theology' which the people have no need for. The present writer, himself a classical Indologist, does not deny that the sacred texts contain the nucleus round which contemporary Asian religiosity has evolved. But to draw an indigenous theology from ancient texts without allowing the actual practice of religion to play its hermeneutical role in the interpretation of those very texts, is to make the cart pull the horse.

It is more profitable, perhaps, to discuss the efforts of those who concentrate on Oriental Spirituality as the locus of an indigenous theology. This word seems to stand for what we have described here as the positive (i.e. liberative) pole of Asian religiosity. It is a whole way of being and seeing which one acquires when the inner core of one's personality (variously called 'mind', 'heart', 'soul', 'consciousness', etc.) is radically transformed by means of an asceticism of Renunciation. Its aim is to free the human person of the Ego, cleanse it of its innate thirst for power over others, and purify it of its propensity for acquisitiveness. It is a psychological process by which one experiences an interior liberation from 'Mammon', to use a Biblical idiom.

In this matter there are four pitfalls to avoid. The first caveat I wish to offer is that indigenization should not amount in practice to that species of 'theological vandalism' by which, all too often, the oriental techniques of introspection are pulled out of the soteriological ethos of Eastern Religions and made to 'serve' Christian Prayer with no reverence for the wholeness of the non-Christian's religious experience. We protested against this insensitiveness, already, at the Asian Theological Conference (1979) and we re-iterate it here, offering at the same time an alternate approach which respects the self-understanding of other religions. (See Part III)

The second warning is that any tendency to create or perpetuate a "leisure class" through 'prayer-centres' and 'Ashrams' which attract the more affluent to short spells of mental tranquility rather than to a life of Renunciation, is an abuse of oriental spirituality. To turn Asian religious experience into an opiate which deadens the conscience of both the Rich and the Poor vis-a-vis their respective stations in life, is unevangelical. The positive pole of Asian religiosity has to synchronize

with the positive pole of poverty. It is the hallmark of an Asian Religion to evoke in its adherents a desire to renounce the Ego and abandon the Worship of Mammon - indeed a fine complement to Jesus' Messianic Mission to the Poor which the Church claims to continue in Asia.

Commercialism is the third danger in the list. What used to happen to our material resources like Tea, Copper, Wood or Oil, is now happening to our spiritual treasures. They go West, thanks to the conspiracy of merchants and missionaries, and return attractively processed....to be sold back to us for our own consumption. The local agents of exploitation are most to be blamed. For, some of our Maharishis and Roshis from Asia have turned meditation into a veritable dollar-spinner! Transcendental Meditation or T.M. is an example of how an oriental product has returned to Asia after being processed into a sophisticated article in the West. Such imported goods seem more respectable in the eyes of most Clerics and Religious of Asian Origin.

Being of an elitist stock by training, they recoil from consulting the authentic sources of oriental spirituality which are found at their door-step. After all, they belong to the local Church of another continent, as we explained earlier. Many ecclesiastical superiors, quite understandably, find these processed goods 'safer' for their subjects. The challenge that original religiosity of Asia throws at the Church is thus neutralized. Even renewal programmes sometimes are so arranged as to keep the participants from being drawn into the spiritual mines of Asia.

Our fourth and final remark is about the conscious or unconscious motives that inspire spiritual dialogues with other religions. I suspect that the spiritual sharing of religious insights is advocated often as a strategy against a common enemy, be it secularism or consumerism, Atheism or Communism. The Christian obligation to make an open attack on the Principalities and Powers that build altars to Mammon - for what else is Atheism and Consumerism? - is carefully replaced by an excessive zeal for intramural sharing of spiritual patrimonies among selected groups of religionists. The emphasis seems to be put on the 'negative pole' of Asian religiosity. Regrettably, therefore, the so-called oriental spirituality is endorsed in Christian circles as a political escape from complex human situations, rather than allowed to burst forth as a prophetic movement against Organized Sin which keeps Asia poor.

(B) Asian Religions and the Politics of Poverty
in the Context of the Local Church's Mission
to the Poor.

Poverty is not just a socio-economic condition of the Asian masses; it is also a political reality. Marxists claim that Religion thrives on it. Capitalists teach that Marxism capitalizes on it. Both Marxists and Capitalists are busy with the politics of poverty. Religion which has its own theory of poverty, is caught in between. It is in the midst of these politico-religious ambiguities that the local Churches in Asia are called to exercise their prophetic mission to the poor. Evangelization takes place always within or against but never outside a given political system.

It is suggested here that in this forest of conflicts one can see a clear path opened before us here in Asia, thanks to its ancient tradition of "religious socialism". Before I describe this phenomenon, let me define the term "socialism". Being a loaded word, I wish to restrict it to mean the theory and praxis of social organization in which the means of production are owned by a whole community and the fruits of labour are distributed among the members equitably. The principle of justice involved here is expressed best in the famous Marxian adage: "To each according to his need; from each according to his ability". In a way, this seems to be the norm that an average human family of any culture adheres to. Why we call it "religious" will become evident as we try to describe this phenomenon.

There are actually two clear versions of religious socialism in Asia: namely, the more primitive form practised by the clannic societies and quasi-clannic societies spread throughout the vast stretches of non-urbanized Asia, and the more sophisticated form represented by the monastic communities of Buddhist (Hindu, Taoist) origin. The clannic society is known to Anthropologists as pre-technological, (I prefer to say pre-technocratic) and its belief system as "animism" - a word which I prefer to replace with the more appropriate phrase, cosmic religiosity in order to include also the refined religious expressions such as Shintoism and Confucianism. In this system the order of nature and the order of society overlap; social harmony is insured by cosmic communion with the Elements of Nature. The communism of Asian monks, on the other hand, is founded on a meta-cosmic religiosity which points to a Salvific Beyond attainable within Man through gnosis; it inculcates - not a negation of cosmic reality as is often erroneously thought - but a 'non-addiction to cosmic needs'. However, the origin and early development of this system has been historically associated with Feudalism that came to be superimposed on clannic societies.

Note, therefore, that the two species of socialism belong to two different social systems (clannic and feudal) and to two different religious systems (cosmic and metacosmic). The relationship between the two varies according to regions. There could be - and not seldom there are - contradictions between the two. The monastic community may practise perfect communism within its own membership but could act as a feudal lord towards the clannic societies. After all, has not history proved that a socialist nation could be exploitative with regard to other countries? The monastic life has often succumbed to this weakness wherever it is maintained by, and therefore, made to legitimize, feudal (and now, capitalist) regimes. What the monks own in common and share equitably could very well be the property of clannic societies, expropriated by political regimes which seek religious sanction from the monks. Thus, contemplative life supposedly based on "voluntary poverty", could be the luxury of a leisure class which is actually maintained by the "really poor".

This, incidentally, is why we warned the 'oriental spirituality enthusiasts' not to foster a feudal or leisure-class mentality, the indigenizers of theology to become poor, and the inculturators to get involved with the masses.

This contradiction between the way monks share land and its fruits, and the way the rural societies share land and labour, seems to fade into a happy symbiosis in some of the least urbanized and the least technocratized areas of Asia. Monks supported by alms live in remote villages in the framework of a religious socialism which knows no cultural or economic gap between the monastic community and the village community. Religion is not made to justify a class division, even if the monk remains a soteriological symbol and spiritual guide set apart and set above the common folk.

This phenomenon may not be as widespread or as permanent as we would like it to be, for there are hostile influences eroding into it both from within the Asian cultures (e.g. feudalism) and from without (e.g. Capitalist technocracy). Nevertheless, in this we have an Asian model of a basic community. Here poverty - even economic poverty--seems to acquire an evangelical flavour because it is practised 'voluntarily' for the good of the community. I seek to be satisfied with what I really need but give all I can to the community. In rural socialism, the earth is everybody's property and nobody's monopoly. In monastic socialism, cosmic needs are made to serve rather than obsess Man. This is a religious conviction, a salvific path. It is a system in which poverty and religiosity conspire to liberate Man from "cosmic obsessions" - for which urbanized Asians have learnt another name: "consumerism".

Thus reinforcing the conclusions of our previous arguments, we suggest that, if the local Church's point of insertion in the Asian ethos is the multiplication of grassroot apostolic communities, then, Asia offers fresh motives for creating them and holds up its own indigenous mould to cast them in. Inculturation? Here is where it happens. Indigenization? This is its only source. Oriental spirituality? You have here its finest societal expression. The ecclesiological revolution we so eagerly wait for as a prelude to inculturation and indigenization is none other than an evangelical response to the promises that religious socialism of Asia offers our local Churches today.

In fact great political leaders of Asia saw in it a great political and social antidote against capitalism, consumerism and, of course, feudalism which is not yet erased out of Asia. The Sarvodaya Movement, as originally envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi and organized by Vinobha Bhave, was founded on this conviction. Mao Tse Tung, and, more particularly, Ho Chi Minh recognized in the peasant mentality both an ingrained capacity for a socialist reconstruction of society as well as a natural inclination for acquisitiveness. The struggle between Grace and Sin, God and Mammon, is never absent in Asia. This is what makes our adoption of rural socialism both a religious imperative and a political option.

If the local Church in Asia dismisses this idea as utopian, it is precisely because she is not of Asia but is a monarchical or feudal establishment of another continent, seeking desperately to be 'inculturated' now - after having failed for centuries to strike roots in Asia. It was she who once linked evangelization with colonization; and it is she who now offers us a capitalist, technocratic model of 'human' development as "pre-evangelization"! Even this criticism of ours is severely censured by her. Recently, the European Central Authority of a local Church which was planted here four hundred years ago, reprimanded the Asian Theologians for criticising Capitalism! Even in the official documents in which she

questions the values of this Atheistic system, one does not often hear her "calling the devil by his name" - to use an Asian idiom for exorcism. For she sees a greater threat in Marxism which is becoming a rival religion in the Third World. Marxist States, no doubt, are confessionalist and give no official recognition to any view of life or code of behavior other than their own. Thus when the Church faces established Marxism, she sees, as in a mirror, her own authoritarianism and dogmatism, her own reluctance to give autonomy to the local communities in the periphery, and her own manoeuvres to centralize power. What is more, if the Church hesitates to challenge Capitalism openly because she is indirectly associated with its institutions, she cannot also condemn Marxist atrocities in Asia without recalling her own colonial centuries which have left indelible scars on entire nations. This dilemma of the Church in Asia is further accentuated by the fact that the time and energy wasted on theoretical battles against Marxism is not more fruitfully devoted to the practical task of joining Asia's own war against injustice and exploitation. Such a Church is not prepared to appreciate or foster Asian Socialism because of its political implications. To sum up then: the first and the last word about the local Church's Mission to the Poor of Asia is total identification (or "Baptismal immersion" as I am about to call it in the next part of this paper) with monks and peasants who have conserved for us, in their religious socialism, the seed of liberation which Religiosity and Poverty have combined to produce. It is the one sure path opened for the local Church to remove the cross from where it has stood for four centuries and plant it once more on Calvary where the prophetic communities die victims of politics and religion in order to rise again as local Churches of Asia. It is this death and resurrection that I wish to discuss immediately in the Third and final part of this paper.

- to be continued -

L'EGLISE EN PROCÈS CHEZ LES JEUNES AFRICAINS

Yves Morel

(This is the second part of Yves Morel's examination of attitudes towards the Church, of today's youth in some higher educational institutions in Cameroun, Tchad and Ivory Coast. Ed.)

2. LES VISAGES DE L'EGLISE

Nous n'avons pas distingué les positions des jeunes sur la foi, Dieu, Jésus-Christ, etc. C'est à dessein, car tout le donné de la foi est reçu dans l'enseignement de l'Eglise; celle-ci est le prisme à travers lequel brillent tous les dogmes. Ainsi, les jeunes parlent de la foi, non comme un besoin au coeur de l'homme, mais comme un ensemble d'éconcés auquel il faut adhérer. Jésus-Christ n'existe pas d'abord pour lui-même, il ne préexiste pas: c'est un personnage présenté par l'Eglise. Commentant l'enquête de R. Deniel, un prêtre ivoirien, Camille Agnerod s'exprime en ces termes: *La religion est trop vue comme un code de vérités ou de lois intangibles... alors qu'elle est une adhésion personnelle et communautaire à quelqu'un qui est l'animateur de cette communauté.* Or, les jeunes ignorent dans l'ensemble - sauf ceux qui appartiennent à des mouvements comme la JEC - cette dernière dimension.

Il faut donc essayer de comprendre pourquoi l'Eglise est encore pour trop de jeunes Africains cette demeure plutôt étrangère sur le seuil de laquelle on attend avec défiance, ou dont on se détourne. Nous pensons que l'Eglise est une société dont les jeunes font connaissance à travers d'autres réalités - famille, école, emploi - d'où un visage déformé et incomplet de l'Eglise. Dans ces trois temps qui marquent le passage de l'enfance à l'état adulte, des archétypes influencent la foi des jeunes. Et sans doute en est-il de même pour bien des adolescents dans le monde entier.

Famille: Par suite de la polygamie, de l'absence souvent prolongée de mariage religieux chez les monogames, de séparations, de divorces et de remariages, bien des parents africains ne participent pas régulièrement à la vie de l'Eglise, et ignorent qu'ils pourraient avoir une vie chrétienne même sans les sacrements. Néanmoins beaucoup d'entre eux désirent que leurs enfants soient baptisés; mais, qu'ils forment ou non un ménage chrétien, ces parents sont peu armés pour transmettre la foi. Ils pensent d'ailleurs que l'éducation est du ressort exclusif de la Mission ou de l'école. Les assemblées chrétiennes sont en grande partie composées d'enfants et de personnes âgées - qui ont résolu leurs problèmes matrimoniaux - et non de personnes actives: il en découle que le jeune adulte finit par trouver anormal de fréquenter l'église: ce n'est pas sa place.

La religion est un passe-temps pour la vieillesse, dit un élève. La foi n'est pas transmise dans la famille, mais occasionnellement et de façon peu compréhensible par ce corps extérieur qu'est l'Eglise pour l'enfant. Et ajoutons-le, pas toujours dans la langue maternelle de l'enfant, mais parfois dans une langue véhiculaire pauvre comme le pidgin-english chez les Anglophones du Cameroun (Cameronais et Nigériens); les enfants sont scolarisés *en anglais*, mais ils apprennent le catéchisme *en pidgin*. Autrement dit, le savoir ecclésial peut apparaître comme moins noble que le savoir scolaire.

Pourquoi les parents tiennent-ils à ce que leurs enfants assistent à la messe et les y contraignent-ils parfois? Etre chrétien a au moins une *triple utilité*: c'est d'abord *une forme d'accès à la modernité*, on l'a constaté dans bien des pays africains. Non seulement rester "païen" paraît rétrograde, mais dans ces pays où l'enseignement privé catholique tient une place souvent considérable, être chrétien est un atout non négligeable pour être admis à l'école, condition sine qua non de promotion. *Je suis de la Mission catholique*, disent encore bien des parents venus présenter leur enfant au directeur de l'école.

Ensuite, les parents pensent que l'éducation chrétienne forme à la *moralité*, et prépare donc les enfants à une meilleure conduite, y compris à leur égard.

Enfin, être baptisé, même s'il est difficile d'être chrétien en cette vie, est une *garantie pour l'au-delà*. C'est vrai pour les enfants pour lesquels la mortalité est encore forte, et pour les parents et les ancêtres décédés. Au moment où les traditions se désintègrent, où l'on doute d'elles, l'Eglise est la seule institution qui offre des rites permettant de penser aux défunts de la famille et d'agir pour eux.

Ainsi, être d'Eglise est une sorte de placement intéressé et non un apprentissage de la liberté et du don de soi.

Voilà pourquoi très tôt la religion fait question au jeune Africain. Son père l'oblige à aller à la messe sans y aller lui-même (c'est vrai partout); une messe à laquelle il ne comprend pas grand'chose, même si elle est célébrée dans sa langue - ce qui n'est pas toujours le cas en ville - car rarement le prêtre prévoit une catéchèse destinée aux enfants, pourtant nombreux dans les églises.

L'Eglise apparaît donc sous le signe d'une autorité mystérieuse et parfois arbitraire, autorité qui s'exprime à travers les parents et le prêtre, dont les actes ne correspondent pas toujours aux paroles et aux ordres. Le prêtre est d'autant plus étrange que parfois encore il est européen.

Cet autoritarisme rejaillit sur la notion même de Dieu: un Dieu tout-puissant qui vit dans sa sphère, ne comprend pas toujours les hommes, les laisse patager dans leurs difficultés et leurs malheurs. En famille, à l'église, à l'école, l'enfant sevré est rarement bénéficiaire d'une tendresse et d'une compréhension continues; il apprend à se méfier, à être prudent. Ces images et ces faits le marquent très fortement et rendent plus difficile la révélation d'un Dieu de miséricorde.

Cette "éducation" se poursuit à l'école. L'autorité du maître, puis celle du professeur, se surajoute à celle des parents et la supplante d'autant plus que ces derniers sont rarement en mesure de suivre les études de leur progéniture. Qu'est-ce que l'école pour bien des jeunes du Tiers-Monde? C'est le lieu de passage obligé pour avoir une chance de sortir de la misère: il faut donc accepter d'y souffrir pour survivre et d'être l'objet de l'incompréhension des enseignants. On sait en effet que la déperdition scolaire est grave en Afrique Noire: sur 1,000 enfants débutant dans le primaire, à peine une soixantaine atteignent la 6^e, et six ou sept seulement la terminale. Les classes du primaire ont fréquemment 80 élèves et plus; malgré la déperdition, celles du secondaire peuvent accueillir plus de 50 élèves, car le nombre des classes et des enseignants du secondaire est insuffisant. A ce propos, il n'est pas inutile de rappeler aux grands élèves que, par rapport à leurs camarades rejetés, ils sont déjà une élite qui a des responsabilités.

Dans le primaire et même dans le secondaire, on recourt encore aux châtimens corporels (coups de règle sur les doigts, chicotte) et aux stupides cent lignes à copier. Les enseignants surchargés, mal préparés et mal payés font des corrections hâtives et distribuent des notes arbitraires. Dans l'enseignement primaire confessionnel, ce sont les mêmes maîtres qui punissent, bâclent parfois leur travail, sont accusés d'engrosser les filles et qui ont l'obligation d'assurer le catéchisme! D'une façon aussi scolaire et autoritaire que les autres matières, sans pouvoir donner d'explication satisfaisante; les élèves rabâchent le vieux catéchisme. Est-ce l'annonce de la Bonne Nouvelle?

Cette école privée et ses maîtres sont déjà l'Eglise pour l'enfant. Quant aux prêtres, ils pénètrent peu le milieu scolaire, y compris l'enseignement privé, à plus forte raison l'enseignement public. On compte officiellement à Douala un seul aumônier pour plus de 30,000 élèves du secondaire, répartis en trente établissements environ. Il est trop peu de prêtres pour cette masse d'enfants et de jeunes, et ajoutons que peu sont spécialisés dans l'apostolat des jeunes.

Même dans les grandes villes où les scolaires représentent au moins un quart de la population totale, l'Eglise ne semble pas prête à se mobiliser en leur faveur. Dans l'enseignement public, les fluctuations d'horaires et l'insuffisance de locaux sont un défi permanent à la patience des rares aumôniers et de leurs auxiliaires. Dans tel lycée de Douala, l'aumônier qui n'a pu organiser des cours avec l'aide de certains élèves, doit se contenter de faire deux ou trois réunions par an pour tout l'établissement et c'est déjà un succès!

Dans ces conditions, quelle image de Dieu et de l'Eglise le jeune peut-il bien acquérir? Un Dieu et une Eglise lointains, muets devant les négligences et les injustices du système scolaire et devant l'indifférence du monde à son égard. Les jeunes sont liés entre eux, ils admirent les "dieux" du stade et de la guitare, mais ils connaissent rarement l'amitié désintéressée d'un adulte, ou bien ils n'y croient pas. Un étudiant disait: *Nous manquons d'adultes de référence.* On comprend alors que Jésus-Christ ne soit souvent pour eux qu'un modèle abstrait, inaccessible, sans réalité, dont ils font très peu mention, sauf ceux qui reçoivent une éducation à la prière personnelle et au contact avec l'Évangile.

Emploi: Avec les sauts d'obstacles que sont le probatoire et le baccalauréat à la fin de la première et de la terminale, ou bien les brevets professionnels, le jeune Africain qui atteint ce niveau entre dans la préparation directe de son avenir. Ces examens et ceux qui les suivent à l'Université ou ailleurs ne sont pas exempts d'un certain arbitraire avec des épreuves longues et parfois difficiles (sur des programmes encyclopédiques) et des corrections de qualité inégale. Même s'il est reçu et diplômé, le jeune n'ignore pas que ses mérites ne suffisent pas et que des "relations" ou des recommandations sont essentielles: le candidat à un emploi sait qu'il faut "mouiller la barbe" du chef du personnel, c'est-à-dire acheter ce dernier. Une fois dans l'entreprise ou dans l'administration, il sait enfin qu'il faut se plier à un code de conduite qui n'a pas grand'chose à voir avec la morale chrétienne: il est prudent de fermer les yeux sur la corruption, sur certaines irrégularités et illégalités, sinon, à vouloir jouer les censeurs, on risque d'être rejeté dans les ténèbres du chômage ou des emplois subalternes. Que dire alors de la situation des jeunes chômeurs ou sans emplois?

Devant ces difficultés, la vie chrétienne paraît inadéquate et impuissante. Face à un Etat jaloux de ses prérogatives, l'Eglise hésite à intervenir sur le plan social et dans la défense de la justice. Cependant, les évêques du Nord-Cameroun ont écrit sur ces sujets une lettre précise et courageuse à l'occasion du Carême 1980. Le temps où la Mission était toute puissante est révolu. L'Etat s'est substitué à la Mission pour nombre de prestations, et le chef de l'Etat, le gouverneur et le préfet sont désormais les dispensateurs des faveurs terrestres, ceux qu'il faut "prier". Aussi n'est-il pas étonnant que les jeunes misent sur le respect de l'Etat et de ses représentants, plus que sur la grâce de Dieu et que, pour trouver un emploi, obtenir de l'avancement, ils cherchent à mettre tous les atouts de leur côté, y compris les influences magiques, la solidarité de la Rose-Croix, etc. C'est vital pour eux: leur bien-être et celui de leur famille en dépend, du moins ils le pensent sans toujours voir que certaines dépendances sont une manière de vendre son âme.

3. SE CONVERTIR A L'APOSTOLAT DES JEUNES

Au total, l'Eglise semble doublement étrangère aux jeunes: par l'histoire de son implantation et donc par son défaut d'inculturation et aussi parce qu'elle semble indifférente à leur problèmes ou impuissante devant eux. Pour les éducateurs qui ne veulent pas se décourager et qui pensent que la Bonne Nouvelle est offerte aux jeunes Africains comme à tout homme, la tâche est immense et stimulante.

- La condition préalable est que l'Eglise se convertisse à l'apostolat des jeunes et se donne les moyens d'agir en ce domaine, surtout en formant des chrétiens, prêtres et laïcs (y compris des parents) qu'elle consacrerait à cette tâche. Un effort est entrepris en ce sens par la formation donnée aux laïcs dans la ville de Douala et ailleurs. Pour l'éducateur, un des meilleurs moyens d'atteindre un certain degré d'inculturation (afin que la Bonne Nouvelle prenne chair dans la culture locale) est d'écouter les jeunes et de les laisser s'exprimer. C'est aussi une occasion unique pour le jeune, plus ou moins traumatisé et durci par son environnement, de rencontrer un adulte compréhensif.

- A partir de là peut s'esquisser une certaine conscientisation des élèves. D'abord leur faire prendre conscience que les questions de foi ne sont pas un jeu de l'esprit; elles sont vitales et les concernent directement. Par exemple, ai-je le droit de nier Dieu tout en affirmant mon être? Ensuite, les aider à comprendre que leurs questions et réponses sur ces sujets sont influencées par leur expérience et leur situation matérielle. Par exemple, on peut être agressif à l'égard de l'Eglise parce qu'on s'est heurté, voilà dix ans, à un prêtre autoritaire.

La réflexion chrétienne est un élément unique de la formation culturelle des jeunes; car, autant les cours leur apprennent à simplifier et à caricaturer certaines questions historiques qui ne les concernent que de loin, autant ces rencontres peuvent leur donner le sens des nuances et des réalités sur des points qui les touchent directement. Par exemple, si l'on accuse la Mission d'avoir pratiqué avec la colonisation, il faut aussi admettre les progrès qu'elle a apportés: éducation, soins, progrès de la condition de la femme et des enfants, étude des traditions et des langues locales par les prêtres et les pasteurs, etc. Comme dans la parabole de l'ivraie, l'Eglise est formée, de tout temps et même aujourd'hui parmi nous, d'hommes divers dont les meilleurs ne témoignent pas toujours à 100% de l'Evangile. Une critique de l'Eglise et des autres me renvoie à moi. Il faut aussi reconnaître que le christianisme a un dynamisme interne: comme fils du même Dieu, des chrétiens africains ont revendiqué l'égalité avec les colonisateurs et donc l'indépendance.

- Mais, il est essentiel de dépasser le stade des questions. Tout mode de vie est déjà une réponse, un choix. A travers des recollections, dans des mouvements tels que le MEJ, la JEC et le Scoutisme, le jeune doit constater que la réponse de l'Evangile n'est pas étrangère à sa vie, ceci à deux niveaux complémentaires: le jeune qui est instruit et qui réfléchit prend conscience de sa responsabilité morale à l'égard des autres. Au collège, à l'Université, plus tard au travail, il est inséré dans un groupe qui ne peut devenir communauté qu'en s'inspirant de la vie ecclésiale. En même temps, la rencontre personnelle et assidue avec le Christ dans la méditation et dans l'Eucharistie, doivent lui découvrir la cohérence et la vérité du Maître de l'Evangile, ainsi que la lumière qu'il apporte sur toute vie.

Même en mettant tous les atouts de son côté, l'éducateur rencontrera inévitablement les difficultés et les échecs liés à la propagation du christianisme. Il est essentiel qu'il respecte la liberté de ses auditeurs et que son enseignement ne soit pas contraignant.

Reference: SPIRITUS, EXPERIENCE RECHERCHE MISSIONNAIRES - Décembre 1981, No. 85.

"STRENGTHEN YOUR BROTHERS"

(LUKE 22:32)

SPIRITAN GENERALATE TEAM

(Cette lettre de l'Equipe Généralice de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit (Spiritans) adressée aux membres de l'Institut fait partie d'une série de lettres similaires venant d'Instituts affiliés à SEDOS, que nous sommes en train de publier. Nous sommes reconnaissants aux Spiritans d'avoir bien voulu nous en faire bénéficier. N.d.l.R.).

INTRODUCTION

"Mission for the future" is a much discussed theme nowadays in most religious institutes. It was the theme of the SEDOS research seminar in March 1981 with 105 delegates from all parts of the world (cf. Spiritan News No.36), and in November representatives of the various Generalates in Rome met to discuss the same subject. Our last General Chapter also devoted a good deal of attention to it.

As we prepare to share our reflection on this theme with you, the words of Scripture come spontaneously to mind: "Strengthen your brothers". Such is indeed our duty. "Strengthen your brothers", because new perspectives are opening up, revealing the beginning of a new age for Mission. "Strengthen your brothers" who "labour in the cause of the Gospel, for the service of a changing Mission is demanding, requires conversion and entails much uncertainty.

We take these words of Christ seriously, for they sum up the task you have asked us to do, to each one being given "the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7).

AT THE SERVICE OF "THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT..."
(1 Cor. 1:2)

The 1980 General Chapter asked for "a continuing commitment to our missionary involvement in the local churches". The growth of local Churches, which is so marked today, has been taking two main directions since Vatican II. One is towards UNITY - that of the Church of God gathered together in a single Body, by the same Spirit with "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:4-6). The other is towards LOCALIZATION, for it is a question of "the Church of God which is at...", in a particular human group with its own cultural, social, economic and political context. Missionary service too must take these two directions (cf. Lum: Gent., 23; Evang. Nunt., 61-62).

The issue is an important one: you are playing your part, however modest, in the communion of Churches; you are contributing to the development of the Church, one and multiform, rich with the diversity of peoples and cultures, completing the mystery "of the Word made flesh"; you are participating in the growth of local Churches which together join in the universal Mission. Missionary activity is gradually moving towards the new era of the Church and her Mission.

The "Localization" of Churches

The "localization" of a Church, i.e. an original way of experiencing the mystery of Christ in a human group, extends to all spheres of the life and mission of this Church. Among its many aspects we may pick out the following:

Communion: The Church of Christ becomes local, not only by the establishment of the hierarchy, but when the peoples of a certain cultural and geographical area base their solidarity and their already existing links on the foundation of the word of Christ and the presence of the Spirit (cf. the new relations in Matt. chaps 5-7 and 18; and in Mark 9:30-10:45).

Ministries: The early Christian communities showed a great variety of charisms and ministries, and the same Spirit who manifested His presence in so many different ways is at work in the Churches today. This conviction helps us to recognize the charisms present in people, to be open to new ministries and to develop coresponsibility at all levels (cf. 1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-11).

Inculturation and liberation: Inculturation means the incarnation of the mystery of the Word in a particular culture, which it both assumes and purifies. It means a new discovery of the Gospel and a further step by the Church towards universality. Liberation, which is inseparable from inculturation and complements it, expresses the strength of the Gospel, which liberates from every oppressive structure, from every violation of fundamental human rights, to "restore all" in the justice and peace of Christ (cf. Gaudium et Spes, 44 and 57-62; Evang. Nunt., 20 and 27-39).

Basic communities: These communities, which are becoming more and more common in all Churches, are a particularly effective form of "localization". They offer a minimum of structure and a maximum of communion and communication. They favour the development of ministries, the exercise of coresponsibility, ongoing dialogue, and the struggle for liberation (cf. Evang. Nunt., 58).

The Spiritan: a "Religious-Missionary": You work for the growth of the Churches and their "localization" by collaborating with other apostolic workers and the whole Christian community in a spirit of diversity and complementarity. To be engaged "with others" in a common task, under the responsibility of the local Church, will be an important aspect of future missionary activity.

What are the particular traits of the religious-missionary Spiritan's service to a Church? The search for a service that is specific to us, for reserved areas or commitments, is doomed to failure. Missionary institutes must recognize that the local Church is responsible for all the apostolic work and is coresponsible, with other Churches, for the universal Mission. This responsibility, which can only grow greater as time goes on, will oblige the institutes to "re-situate" themselves. What is specific to each institute will be certain traits in its life and action that are recognized by its members as forming a common bond and spirit.

More concretely, we may single out some aspects of Spiritan presence in the Churches:

Like the local Churches: the different Spiritan circumscriptions themselves experience a "localization" in accordance with the concrete circumstances of the country, people and Churches. *District Chapters*, which are held more and more in dialogue with the local churches, are essential. Spiritans will probably diversify still more in future, and this will be a good thing.

Our global aim is to contribute to the development of Churches until they are self-sufficient. Gradually Churches arrive at a stage of maturity where they no longer need a massive missionary presence. We must be able to discern the criteria of maturity, taking into account the Church itself and our own finalities.

Mobility in commitments will impose itself more and more on the Congregation.

We strongly encourage mobility of commitments in the circumscriptions, *going from the centre towards frontier situations* - a movement that is becoming one of our major concerns. Districts like Kenya, Cameroon and Senegal have moved towards zones of first evangelization. Provinces like England, France and the United States are working for migrants and abandoned minorities. "A deepening commitment towards the poor" was one of the great priorities of the 1980 General Chapter. This movement from the centre towards frontier situations is becoming a "leitmotiv" of our animation. The Congregation must revive its original ideal.

Missionary: We must help the Churches to become more missionary, as local Churches and still more as sharing in the universal Mission. A new missionary drive will thus be developed. Stress on basic communities and on our Spiritan Foundations can be of great assistance here.

Religious life: The Churches need the witness of religious life (SL, 61) and in particular of *community life*. While respecting the demands of the ministry and the personal needs of confreres, there should be a move from too great dispersion to real community life. At the Enlarged Council next May, a survey will be presented on community life, in our own Congregation and in others.

"THE CARE OF ALL THE CHURCHES" (2 Cor.11:28).

At the Service of Communion Between Churches

The development of local Churches, incarnating themselves in different cultures and situations, requires ever deeper communion between Churches to ensure both their growth and their unity. Missionary institutes, because of their internationality and their presence in so many Churches, can play a leading role in this. They can act as channels for communicating the original and complementary "words" that the Churches have to say to each other; they bear witness to the universality of the one Church of Christ and they too have the "care of all the Churches".

This role of exchange and communion, important for Mission today, will be still more so tomorrow. Churches in all continents will make their own specific contributions to Mission. Among the four main missionary activities picked out by the recent SEDOS meeting, the influence of Asia was stressed for dialogue, of Africa for inculturation, and of Latin America for liberation; proclamation is common to all. Missionary congregations have their part to play in all four.

The service of exchange and communion will thus take on more and more importance for the missionary, and his activity will have to develop in this direction. The presence of representatives of other Churches is desirable, even if the local Church is self sufficient, as has often been pointed out. It is easy to guess the demands of this service: the missionary should be rich with the experience of his Church of origin and also with that of other Churches; and he should be open to the main currents of thought in the Church today. Refresher courses, on-going formation and theological reading are necessary, and the "rotation" of personnel can help in the updating process.

The implications and possibilities of this service must be explored, but already exchange and communion between members of the Congregation and between Provinces, Districts and Foundations can be recommended. In our meetings, such as those of Major Superiors and Chapters, we should stress the inter-ecclesial dimension. We should pay special attention too to the North-South dialogue. We should make use of home leave, the mass media and meetings to tell of the "wonderful deeds" that God is working in the Churches.

AT THE SERVICE OF CORESPONSIBLE CHURCHES

No Church should turn in on itself. Each local Church is also co-responsible, along with the others for the universal mission. Religious Congregations place themselves at the service of this coresponsibility. While sharing in a Church's local evangelization, the missionary should remain open to the universal Mission. Mobility and taking root locally are two expressions of one and the same fidelity to both the Congregation and the local Church.

The missionary solidarity of Churches expresses itself in their solidarity on the level of personnel. Some Churches are rich in personnel, others poor. Churches grow towards maturity at different speeds; fields of apostolate evolve; new missionary situations present themselves.

Congregations can play an important role in this solidarity at the level of personnel, taking care to go rather towards poor and abandoned Churches and to respond to urgent missionary situations wherever they may be. Personnel will always be needed for frontier situations. To engage more easily in this service of coresponsibility, the Congregation must reassess its commitments and clarify its priorities. It would be good too if Congregations went about this reassessment in dialogue with each other and with local Churches.

One of the advantages of coresponsibility is that it will help both the younger and older Churches to become more missionary. Special attention should be paid here to the Southern Hemisphere, as Pope John Paul II did on Mission Sunday 1981: "A phenomenon that gladdens us and for which we must thank the Lord is the birth of a missionary movement in the young Churches which, from being evangelized, are becoming evangelizers... The young Churches which, in their turn, have become missionary, are giving proof of maturity in the faith. They have realized that a local Church that is not missionary is not fully Catholic" (18 Oct. 1981).

It is an important development: the young Churches throughout the world, together with the older ones, will collegially share the task of evangelization, both locally and in the universal Mission. Missionaries and their points of origin are multiplying and diversifying.

It is in this context that we must see our young Provinces and Foundations in the Southern Hemisphere and missionary animation in the Northern. Among the priorities drawn up by the 1980 Chapter were "promoting new Spiritan Foundations" and "promoting a missionary spirit in the local Churches". We ask all confreres, then, to move in the direction that Mission is taking today: the young Provinces and Foundations are the business of each Spiritan and not merely of the Congregation in general.

Another point to be noted is the growing diversification of the Congregation's membership. Africans form the largest group of young Spiritans at the moment. For us too there are new mission-sending circumstances. And it is fitting that, at least until they find their full identity, the young Provinces and Foundations should have their own mission areas. We are working on providing them with these.

"GO OUT TO THE WHOLE WORLD" (MK 16:15)

These well-known words of Christ take on new urgency today, and some confreres may be a bit uneasy at the thought of the Congregation opening up to all continents. The 1980 Chapter recommended "greater openness to the call to universal Mission" and, in line with this, the General Council has decided to promote "greater openness to the world - to the whole world".

Mission today is multidirectional: "from everywhere to everywhere". The distinction between 'sending' Churches and 'receiving' Churches is dying out, and the missionary movement developing in the Southern Hemisphere is opening up new paths for the future. The calls and challenges of today's world invite religious Congregations to "move out and encounter humanity in its struggles and diversity" (SEDOS Seminar).

A danger for missionary institutes is that they may remain fixed in an outdated notion of mission, grow old in their present commitments, refuse to face up to today's challenges, and be overtaken by events.

The General Council has adopted a policy of promoting movement from the centre towards frontier situations. It may express itself only in token foundations, but, taken together, they are a significant move.

The poor must always be a priority for us. Poverty is on the increase throughout the world, and the SEDOS Seminar pointed out "the widespread, even global character of oppression". Our care for the poor should go first of all towards those who are suffering from injustice and whose fundamental human rights have been trampled upon. We must become actively involved in work for Justice and Peace.

Each circumscription, if it has not already done so, should undertake this movement towards frontier situations: first evangelization, abandoned or oppressed minorities, marginalized urban groups, refugees (especially in Africa), migrants, dialogue with Islam, non-evangelized milieus, involvement in contemporary problems such as unemployment, racism and violence.

At the level of the Congregation as a whole, there will have to be greater mobility. Some of the 1980 Chapter decisions have not been too welcome to all the confreres. It is true that our numbers are going down, but we must also look to the future. The evolution of Mission and various calls on us require diversification and greater efforts to ensure the Congregation's vitality and its ability to adapt to the future. We are considering the needs of Asia, and of India in particular. It is clear that Asia is the greatest missionary challenge today, and new approaches are needed. We are also looking at requests from Latin American countries. The movement is towards greater 'universality' in the Congregation.

Our Brothers have an important part to play in the renewal of our missionary activity. As consecrated laymen, they can, in their professional work, "encounter humanity in its struggles and diversity". They can more easily enter non-evangelized milieus and be witnesses to the Gospel where priests may not be allowed to work. For the renewal of our Brothers we shall have to go further than the 1980 Chapter did. The unanimous approval, without discussion, of SL 97-100 was felt by several, both Fathers and Brothers, as lack of interest rather than the opposite.

It is through contact with the unevangelized that the importance of Mission is brought home to us. On the occasion of his meeting with the centurion, Jesus saw his good will and made it clear that Mission would have no bounds: "Many will come from east and west to take their places at the feast" (Mt 8:10-11).

THE GENERALATE TEAM

Reference: i/d INFORMATION-DOCUMENTATION, No. 3 - January 1982.

"MOBILITY"

(Interview with Sr. Jane Fell, SCMM).

Jane, I hear you are returning overseas, leaving for Papua New Guinea after fourteen years in the U.S.A. Do you see this departure differently from when you left for the first time more than twenty years ago?

There are big differences! When I left for the first time the Society had a lot more control. Now SCMM has no say at all. The bishop wants me in Mount Hagen, but is not free to let me come. The government does not take ex-patriates easily. It took months before I was certain that I was accepted by the Ministry of Health.

Secondly, when we went in the past, we more or less went with the thought to stay. Now I am going to work up a job and then hand over. I am comfortable with that.

Thirdly, the impetus for going is different. Sr. Winnie Pearsall and I are going to form a community with Sr. Mary Lois Jung - our focus is community. We do not just come together to do a job.

Fourthly, I will be working under the leadership of the local people and that is a new experience for me. Sure, I have been working as an American under Americans these years, but that is different. In Afghanistan I worked in an advisory position to nationals. I left Rawalpindi when we handed over to the Pakistanis. Other sisters worked there later under Pakistani leadership, but I never had that experience.

Are you happy to go?

I am going there blank, in the blind. It is a real faith experience, for I have no visa yet. But I have a time schedule. I resigned my job here. I am planning to celebrate Christmas with my family. Then I will go to Pakistan for two or three months for an update in labour and delivery and appropriate technology in Mirpurkhas.

How do you see your experience in the U.S.A.?

I am grateful for these seven years in the U.S.A. I worked as a Family Nurse Practitioner in Public Health teaching. I am glad to feel capable and comfortable in my own country. At first, after fourteen years overseas, I did not feel sophisticated enough. It was a choice: to stay here or to serve overseas. I still believe we can make a contribution in an overseas culture. I am still young enough, although it is not so much a matter of age, for Sr. Winnie Pearsall, my companion, is 71 years old.

Was it difficult to get a job in the U.S.A. after service overseas?

Not really, We have experience and skills and something you might call maturity, I suppose. It is not just age, but we seem to make attractive employees. But these years here have given me an inner security and I feel I was able to grow in many ways.

In Mirpurkhas they teach in Urdu. What language will you use in Papua New Guinea? Will there be language problems?

I know enough Urdu to manage in Mirpurkhas. In Papua New Guinea there are some 200 languages. The official language is English. I will be teaching in English.

I will come into an existing program with a Papua New Guinean as director. It is part of a nursing school, the section for midwifery. It is for boys and girls. In Papua New Guinea it is like Afghanistan apparently: nursing is a male career. In India and Pakistan it is not.

I wonder whether the male students will also learn to do midwifery!

I don't know! There are many things I don't know yet: what type of text-books we will use; whether there are possibilities for the Public Health teaching I have been doing these recent years in the U.S.A. I am expected to teach midwifery, and I have never taught midwifery before, so that is also new to me. That is also why I want to go to Mirpurkhas first.

One thing is certain: I am needed. They are two tutors short and they were going to close the school unless they found at least one. Only when they heard I was coming did they accept a new class!

Here is another difference: twenty years ago when we were assigned, we knew where we were going, we knew the job beforehand. This time I feel sure in faith, that this is what the Lord wants, but there are many unknowns.

I wish you success, Jane! Courage, strength and a sense of humor in your venture!

D.D.

Reference: SMM INTERCONTINENT, SMM-I, No. 135, 15 February 1982.

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