

82/Nd. 7.

May 1st, 1982

In this issue: Father Pieris' article is concluded in this issue.

He asks: What kind of cross does the missionary proclaim? Is the local church in Asia as distinct from the local Church of Asia still allied to neocolonialism in order to survive? Is the missionary now involved in "development projects" advocating a theory of development which "developed countries" evolved in the very process of causing underdevelopment in Asia? Is this development now giving way to "liberation" in which a small minority Church claims to offer "Liberation" to Asia without first entering into liberative streams of Asian religiosity?

The questions have a particular relevance to Southeast Asia but missionaries everywhere can study them with profit.

Breda Noonan was surprised to discover in Manila that whatever people expected of religious they did not expect them to live poorly-- So she tried to eat at the table of the poor. She reflects on this experience which entailed giving up power, status and privilege.

Fr. Taylor writes on the meaning of marriage in Africa and Fr. Smith describes the launching of a small but significant project aimed at creating a new missiology for the Church.

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### Coming Events

Mission and Marxism in Africa	Tuesday, May 18th, 3 - 6:30 p.m. CChristian Brothers Generalate.
Sedos Executive Committee Meeting	Monday, 3rd May, 4:00 p.m. at Sedos.
Yoga Meditation (Dr. C. Vaz)	25th - 30th May: 4:00 - 5:00 Women 5:30 - 7:00 Men Center for Interreligious Studies Via Martino V, 26B; 00167 Rome. (Tel. 622.1676)

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

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Aloysius Pieris

*(Dans cette troisième et dernière partie, Aloysius Pieris fait un appel en faveur d'un double baptême en ce qui concerne la religiosité et la pauvreté asiatiques. Il s'appuie sur le choix fait par Jésus et par Jean-Baptiste dans le contexte de leur temps. Le vrai missionnaire doit se plonger lui-même dans les eaux baptismales de la religiosité asiatique qui est antérieure au christianisme, avant qu'il ne puisse baptiser les peuples d'Asie et essayer d'incultuer le message chrétien parmi eux. Cela ne comporte pas une perte d'identité. Jésus lui-même a énoncé le principe de se perdre soi-même en vue de trouver ses sources. Le missionnaire ne peut pas éviter le calvaire de la pauvreté en Asie, s'il doit prêcher, baptiser et susciter des disciples. On ne peut jamais séparer ce que Dieu a uni: le Christ et la Croix. N.d.l.R).*

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PART III. THE WAY TOWARDS THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL  
REVOLUTION: THE DOUBLE BAPTISM IN  
ASIAN RELIGIOSITY AND ASIAN POVERTY.

(A) The Jordan of Asian Religiosity

Shillebeeckx has drawn our attention to the fact that the Baptism under John was Jesus' first prophetic gesture, the memory of which became a source of lasting embarrassment to the first generation of Christians. The embarrassment lay in the fact that Jesus whom His followers had come to worship as the Lord and the Christ had thought it fit to begin his messianic mission by becoming Himself a follower of John the Baptizer. The ecclesiological implications of this Christological event have not been sufficiently appreciated in the contemporary Church. I wish, therefore, to draw from it at least four missiological principles for the local Churches in Asia.

In the first place we observe that Jesus was faced with several streams of traditional religiosity when He answered His prophetic call. Not every kind of religion appealed to Him. From His later reactions we gather that the narrow ideology of the zealot movement did not attract Him. Nor did the sectarian puritanism of the Essenes have any impact on Him. As for the Pharisaic spirituality of self-righteousness, Jesus openly ridiculed it. His constant confrontations with the Sadducees - the Chief Priests and Elders - indicate that he hardly approved their aristocratic "Leisure-Class" spirituality. Rather, it was in the ancient (Deuteronomic) tradition of prophetic asceticism represented by the Baptizer that Jesus discovered an authentic spirituality and an appropriate point of departure for His own prophetic mission. In opting for this form of liberative religiosity to the exclusion of others which appeared enslaving, He indulged in a species of "discernment" which we Christians in Asia, faced to the full with a variety of ideologies and religions, are continually invited to make.

Secondly, we can immediately sense in this event, a peculiar reciprocity between John's own personal spirituality and that of his followers. The Baptizer represented a "world-renouncing" spirituality of an extreme sort. We are told that he lived 'with nature' rather than 'in society'; his diet and his attire - things picked up from the forest - were symbolic of this brand of hermitical asceticism. But the Baptizer did not impose it on the baptized. The latter were the simple and the humble, the "religious poor" of the countryside, the ostracised but repentant sinners, the anawim who were drawn by the Baptizer's preaching and his life-style to be ever more receptive to the Good News of imminent Liberation. Thus, the poor too had a "spirituality" of their own. It was, therefore, at Jordan when Jesus stood before the Baptizer and amongst the baptized, that the two streams of spirituality found their point of confluence. Jesus Himself about to pass through a wilderness experience of hermitical asceticism, comes to John - not to baptize others, but to be baptized, thus identifying Himself with the "Religious Poor" of the countryside. Once again the ecclesiological implication of this Christological event is too obvious to explain. The Asian local Churches have a mission to be at the point of intersection between the metacosmic spirituality of the monastic religions and the cosmic religiosity of the simple peasants, to be the locus where the liberative forces of both traditions combine in such a way as to exclude the aristocratic leisure-class mentality of the former and superstitions of the latter. This is a missionary method we learn from our Master.

The third principle we wish to enunciate here has to do with the "loss of authority" to which we reduced the current crisis of mission. Jesus' first prophetic gesture - like every other prophetic word and deed - is "self-authenticating". The Prophet speaks and acts in God's name and with God's authority. If an event does not reveal this authority, then it is not prophetic. Jesus' humble submission to John's Baptism, embarrassing as it was to early Christians, appeared to them, all the same, as a public manifestation of His authority to preach God's liberating reign about to dawn on the anawim. It was with this act of humility that His credibility was certified by God in the presence of the poor: "Hear Ye Him". It was a prophetic moment precisely because it was then that both His messianic self-understanding and His Missionary credentials before the People were bestowed on Him. Would that the local Church in Asia be as humble as her spouse and Lord! Would that we Christians seek to be baptized rather than baptize! The "fulfilment theory" of the ancient Fathers now revived by Vatican II - which the present writer has repeatedly questioned in the past - relegates other religions to a "pre-Christian" category of spirituality to be "fulfilled" through the Church's missionary endeavour.

It is on the abasis of this theory that some (Western) missiologists speak of the need to "baptize" the precursor's religiosity and culture rather than of the prophetic imperative to immerse oneself in the Baptismal waters of Asian religions that pre-date Christianity. The local Church in Asia needs yet to be "initiated" into the pre-Christian traditions under the tutelage of our ancient gurus, or she will continue to be an ecclesiastical complex full of "power" but lacking in "authority". It is only in the Jordan of Asian religiosity that she will be acknowledged as a voice worthy of being heard by all: "Hear Ye Him". The mission crisis is solved only when she is baptized in the twofold liberative tradition of monks and peasants of Asia. Like her own Master, let her sit at the feet of Asian gurus not as an ecclesia docens but as an

ecclesia discens lost among the "religious poor" of Asia, among the anawim who go to these gurus in search of the Kingdom of Holiness, Justice and Peace. The many individual attempts made in this direction are but symbolic beginnings. Unless the institutional Church takes the plunge herself, she can hardly hope to be for our Asians a readable word of Revelation or a credible sign of salvation.

The fourth missiological principle comes as a response to the 'problem of identity' which this third principle evokes. There is a phobia both in the West and in the (Western) local Churches in Asia, that there is, here, a serious threat to the Christian identity of a believing community. A closer look shows that the roots of this phobia lie in the difficult option we have to make between a clear past and an unknown future - between the local Churches in Asia with a clear Western identity and the local Churches of Asia with an yet unperceived Asian identity. Further, in the model of the past, the Western identity overlaps with the Christian identity, and so in the Church of the future, one desires quite rightly that "Asianness" coincides with "Christianness". But, Christian identity never exists per se as a kind of neutral quantity from which the Western elements could be deducted and the Asian features added! This difficulty comes from the very nature of a local Church - which is at once Church and local.

In this, as in everything else, the Church must return to its source: Jesus Christ who has enunciated for us the principle of losing one-self in order to find it. The clearest example is His Baptism in the Jordan. This is precisely the fourth missiological principle. Was it not by losing His identity amongst the humble but repentant sinners and the "religious poor" of His country that He discovered - for Himself and for others around Him - His authentic self-hood: the lamb of God who liberates us of Sin, the Beloved Son to be listened to, the Messiah who had a new message and a new Baptism to offer? John's spirituality was traditional but negative; Jesus' religiosity was positive and entirely new. To John's curses on the self-righteous religious bigots and political leaders, Jesus would add the blessings and promises offered to the marginalized poor and the ostracized sinner. The Baptizer preached bad news about the coming judgement, but Jesus, whom he baptized, had good news to give about the imminent liberation. The Precursor was conferring Baptism of Water on the converts. The Beloved Son would rather have the Baptism of the Cross conferred on Himself for the conversion of the World. The one would question the belief that salvation came simply by membership in the Chosen Community and ask for individual conversion, but the other would change the people so converted into a community of love. Yes, there would be a radical change also in the life-style that Jesus chose in contrast with John's. The Baptizer came without eating and drinking; while the Son of man would go to parties in the company of sinners. Thus plunging Himself into the stream of an ancient spirituality, He came out with His own new mission. It is Baptism alone that confers on us our Christian identity and the Christian newness we look for in Asia. Is it not the fear to lose her identity that keeps the local Church from discovering it? Is it not the fear to die that keeps it from living? The newness of Asian Christianity will appear only as a result of our total participation in the life and aspirations of the 'religious poor' of Asia.

## (B) The Calvary of Asian Poverty

The trajectory of 'poverty' that links Jordan with Calvary is the other missiological paradigm that we wish our local Churches in Asia to reflect upon. We have already noted that, of all the religious currents of Israel, only the Johannine stream of spirituality appeared truly liberative in the judgement of Jesus. John had renounced wealth and power so radically and to such excesses that he had immense authority before the "religious poor" of Israel to speak in God's name. Authority is always associated with poverty, not power. In fact, at his preaching those who wielded power lost their authority. They killed him in rage (Mt. 14.1-12). The lesson was clear: Only he who is radically poor is qualified to preach the Kingdom and only those who are poor are disposed to receive it. For God and Mammon are enemies.

After being initiated into Johannine asceticism, Jesus is said to have had a decisive confrontation with Wealth, Power and Prestige: three temptations which he conquered by means of three renunciations (Mt. 4. 1-11) Jesus, the labourer's son (Mt. 13. 55) who had no place of his own to be born in (Lk. 2.7) would then onwards have no place of his own to lay his head on (Mt. 8. 20) or even to be buried in (Mt. 27. 60). Jesus would go much further than John. His poverty was not merely a negative protest; not just a passive solidarity with the 'religious poor' of Israel. It was a calculated strategy against Mammon whom He declared to be God's rival (Mt. 6. 24). The Kingdom He announced was certainly not for the Rich (Lk. 6. 20-26). It requires a miracle for a Rich man to give up his wealth and enter the Kingdom (Mk. 10. 26-27). His curses on the 'haves' (Lk. 6. 24-25) and his blessings on the 'have-nots' (Lk. 6. 20-23) are sharpened by His dictum that it is in and through the poor (the hungry, the naked, etc.) that He would pass His messianic judgement on entire nations (Mt. 25. 31-46). No wonder that the very sight of money polluting religion made Him resort to physical violence (Jn. 2. 13-17). For His mission was, therefore, a prophetic mission, i.e. a mission of the poor and a mission to the poor; a mission by the poor and a mission for the poor. This is the truth about evangelization, which the local Churches in Asia find hardest to accept. To awaken the consciousness of the poor to their unique liberative role in the totally new order God is about to usher in - this is how we have already defined evangelization - is the inalienable task of the poor, already awakened. Jesus was the first Evangelizer - poor but fully conscious of His part in the war against Mammon with all its principalities and powers.

And it was this mission that was consummated on the cross - a cross which the money-polluted religiosity of His day planted on Calvary with the aid of a foreign colonial power (Lk. 23. 1-23). This is where the journey, begun at Jordan, ended. When true religion and politics join hands to awaken the poor, then Mammon too, makes allies with religion and politics to conspire against the evangelizer. Religion and politics must go together - whether for God or against God.

It is, then, not without reason that the evangelists related Jesus' first prophetic gesture at the Jordan to His last prophetic gesture on Calvary by using the same word to describe both: Baptism (Mt. 3. 13-15; Mk. 15. 35; Lk. 12.50). Each was a self-effacing act which revealed His prophetic authority. At the first baptism He was acknowledged as the beloved Son. At the second baptism the evangelist heard even the colonial power that killed Him, proclaim that He was truly The Son of God (Mk.15.39):

indeed a prophetic moment when a humiliation gave birth to an exaltation capable of gathering the prophetic community, as the fourth gospel clearly teaches (Jn. 12: 32-33). The Baptism of the cross, therefore, is not only the price He paid for preaching the Good News, but the basis of all Christian discipleship (Mk. 8. 34). Thus the threefold missionary mandate to preach...baptize and make disciples - understood in the past as the juridical extension of one local Church's power over other localities through a rite of initiation, must be redeemed of this narrow ecclesio-centric interpretation by tracing it back to the cross: the final proof of authentic preaching, the only true Baptism which gives sense to the sacrament that goes by that name, and the criterion of true Christian discipleship.

This cross, we have now had for centuries in our continent. It was Fulton J. Sheen - a missiologist of quite another era, who said that the West seeks a Christ without the Cross while the East has a Cross without Christ! The judgement on the East is not quite exact. If there is no Christ without a cross, as Sheen supposes, could there be a cross without Christ? Can man ever put asunder what God has put together: Christ and the Cross?

The cross that we speak of - a symbol of shame - is the one that a mercantile Christianity planted here with the aid of foreign colonial powers. It is on this cross that the Asian poor are being baptized today! The unholy alliance of the missionary, the military and the merchants of a previous era now continues with greater subtlety. For the local Churches so planted in Asia, being still local Churches of former colonizing countries, now continue their alliance with neo-colonialism in order to survive, thus causing the class division in the Church as we remarked in Part II above. Colonial Education of the great missionary era has now given way to "development projects" - which obviously advocate a theory of development that "developed countries" evolved in the very process of causing underdevelopment here! It is the new form of "pre-evangelization".

Now development is giving way to 'liberation' - in the same climate of Christian megalomania. A small minority Church claims to offer "Liberation" to Asia without first entering into liberative streams of Asian religiosity which has its own antidotes against Mammon. A sixteenth century brand of Latin Christianity - "inculturated", i.e. "tanned" after being in the oriental climate for four centuries as the one redemptive agent of God - now claims to 'liberate' Asia without allowing Asia to liberate it of its Latinity! Hence our final appeal to the local Churches in Asia: Harden not your hearts; Enter into the stream at the point where the religiosity of the Asian poor (represented by the peasants) and the poverty of the Religious Asians (reflected in our monks) meet to form the ideal community of total sharing, the "religious socialism" which, like the early Christian Communism, can be swallowed up in the jungle of Western ideologies and theologies. The prophetic communities that have come up as a result of being baptized consciously or unconsciously into the Asian socialism - are now on the trajectory of poverty linking Jordan to Calvary. It is they who speak with authority in Asia; it is they who are the credible words of Revelation, the readable signs of salvation, effective instruments of liberation. They are the true local Churches of Asia, for they have been baptized in the Jordan of Asian Religiosity and on the Calvary of Asian Poverty. Until they are officially recognized as local Churches of Asia, the authority crisis will continue in the local Churches in Asia.

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TO EAT AT THEIR TABLE

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Sr. Breda Noonan (Philippines)

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*(Soeur Breda Noonan, des Soeurs de Saint-Columban fit ses études en Sciences sociales à University College de Dublin. Elle obtint ensuite un degré de maîtrise en sciences sociales appliquées à l'Université de Brunel, Middlesex, Grande Bretagne. En 1966, elle se rendit aux Philippines. Sa communauté était située dans le barrio. Elle nous dit: "Ce fut pour moi un choc de réaliser que parmi tout ce que les gens attendent de nous religieuses, ce n'est pas que nous vivions pauvrement. Nous qui avons fait voeu de faire route avec le Christ pauvre, nous pouvons manger sans difficulté à la table des riches et des puissants vivre dans leur voisinage, partager leur standing de vie, sans que personne n'y trouve à redire." N.d.l.R).*

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These reflections were gained through the two and a half years I spent as a member of a community in a slum/squatter area alongside the international seaport of the city of Cagayan de Oro. Shortage of Sisters, both in my own congregation and in the Rural Missionaries to which I belong, meant that my community was a group of young people from the area. These young people gradually came to understand what the situation was asking of them and they are now ready to carry on the task of sharing their understanding of the Good News with their own people.

One reason for my assignment to this slum area was my sense of dissatisfaction with the living of religious life as I had experienced it. Previously, work had involved me with the poor in another city, but, each midday and evening, I withdrew to a lifestyle very different to theirs. This two-tier existence and the barrier it created between myself and the people was not religious life as I felt it could be. It was only later that I realized how great the divide really was.

Apart from this search for an authentic expression of religious life, I also sensed that I did not really know or understand the life and culture of a poor community. Even superficially, it was clearly very different from the life and the culture in which I was participating. If I did not know the people how could I know what they were asking of me? Many other people were willing to tell me what to do and, of course, I had my own ideas but I felt it was time I just learnt to listen to the poor themselves.

Community Life: In our community home in the *barrio* we had a kitchen, an all-purpose room for meetings, working and sleeping, and a small balcony. Four families lived downstairs with about fourteen children between them. Much later, when more people were coming to the house and I was fearful that the floor would cave in, we took another room downstairs. Facilities were simple but adequate. Water we bought at a faucet nearby and our shower was across the road at 30 *centavos* a shower.

The toilet was very primitive and I had to overcome my fear of cockroaches to be able to use it. Towards the end of our stay water arrived at our backdoor and we had a shower close by. Our budget was about the same as our neighbours and I discovered that such a budget did not allow us to buy meat and only occasionally fish. I soon learnt to be creative in cooking vegetables!

This was my introduction to life in the *barrio*. A bed to sleep on, a bathroom and an available toilet are things that we normally take for granted. To realize experientially that these things are not essentials but are even luxuries for the majority of our people was perhaps the first breakthrough in re-evaluating my narrow middle-class perception of reality. It also brought a new sense of freedom.

The shock came though, when I realized that whatever people expect of us religious they do not expect us to live poorly. We who are vowed to walk with the poor Christ can eat so easily at the tables of the wealthy and better-off, live in their neighbourhoods, share their standard of living, educate and serve their children and families without anyone being shocked. To integrate with a workers' community is to upset the normal pattern of status and privilege that society now associates with religious.

After the initial shock or wonder at my presence in their *barrio*, the people began to visit us. One contact led to another; one child to another. Since our home was the same as theirs they soon relaxed and I discovered the significance of the surroundings in facilitating relationships, and *relationship* is where it all starts. This relationship is basic to being able to learn from the people and to work with them. It makes possible a genuine friendship. Recently, a well known theologian wrote that the witness value of our working with the poor lies in our 'loving the unlovable'. Anyone who thinks of the poor as being 'unlovable' would be advised to stay well away from them. A slum community certainly shows us human weakness in the raw but, in and through this, I experienced the strength, dignity and courage of people who know they have little but their own God-given humanity and this they cherish.

At present, if we invite the poor to our homes or to our tables, the inequality and disparity is all too obvious. They are usually ill at ease. They do not belong. Sharing their way of living and giving them a chance to be themselves with me was essential if I was to build a real relationship. Their food was the same as ours. All was shared. Even if I sneaked out to buy some bread from the store across the way, sure enough our two small neighbours would spot me and would be waiting in the kitchen for their share. There was no escape! If we have only one table, it must be the table of the poor to which we are invited. If we continue with two tables, it is easy to guess where Christ is eating.

Experiencing the Situation of the People: Once the relationship began to be built I experienced, in a new way, the meaning of oppression and exploitation. I saw the basic insecurity which rules their lives. In a room beneath us lived Marina with her husband and two small children. Their world was a room 5' in height and about 8' in width. Her husband tried to support the family by driving a motor-bike with a sidecar for passengers but often he had no work. No work meant no food and no rent. They had no relatives nearby. At one particularly difficult time Marina decided to give up her children to her



in-laws and go to Manila as a maid with a certain well off family. The two children were Marina's life. She saw no way that they could live unless she gave them up. Another friend was Pedro. He worked at the pier and, at the age of 63, he was unexpectedly retired from work one Friday afternoon. His pension paid by Social Security is 127 pesos (about \$17) a month and on that he has to support his family and finish building a home as their house was burnt in the fire which afflicted the *barrio*. Through living so closely to these families I learnt to understand the depth of daily insecurity they had to sustain. There is no security in work or in a place to stay; life is just a daily struggle to survive.

I had known this before but, now, it was the life-situation of a people I was beginning to know as friends and fellow workers. I became very angry. How can any human being treat another human being like this? We are so blind that we allow it to continue without crying out. How did we become so blind and protected from the sinful reality of labourers exploited, urban poor evicted, the sick and the children impoverished and government agencies offering a mockery of service in the face of this reality. This daily battle for survival revealed to me our mastery of selective seeing and hearing which we need to protect ourselves. The Gospel gift of being able to see and to hear, the first stage of conversion, is the gift of the poor and oppressed to us if we open our lives to their lives. To be able to see and to hear is to feel all this in a completely new and very painful way, made more painful by the present prevailing passivity, fear and powerlessness of the people affected.

The poor reared in this culture of fear, poverty and powerlessness have learnt not to trust themselves but to trust "their betters", I, with my religious, educated and foreign background, was one of "their betters". My middle-class perception of the world and its problems and the causes of these problems told me that leaders need education, need a professional training and a standing in society. Intellectuals and professionals are our modern day saviours! The Church, being today a middle-class institution, naturally perpetuates this. The result is that the poor, as poor, are not trusted as leaders in either secular or religious society. They just do not meet our criteria. We are not willing to give them time to talk in *their* way, to explain *their* perception of life and of what is happening to *them*. "Who is this man?" Is he not the carpenter's son? Was I now prepared to trust the people to be the true architects of their own future? For me to take an option for the poor and to stand in solidarity with them demanded just that. It meant to have faith in them as Christ had faith that a fisherman could confront the might of the world with the truth of the Kingdom.

The Human Face of God: Faith in the people: faith in God, Jose Comblin has written that we need to "accept and respect the anonymity of God and to pay attention to the fact that Jesus is really man, to hear him and to accompany him as if we were accompanying a man". Only if we discover the human face of God can we discover his divinity and avoid the risk of creating an idol in our own image. The humanity of God is above all, a crucified humanity and participation in the life of a marginalized, struggling community confronted me with this truth. Liturgical expressions which do not arise from this experience bring no such confrontation. I found I often had to engage in a gymnastics of faith to make the connection between life as lived and our liturgical rituals. The cross is very uncomfortable to live with and when we stand with a community struggling for liberation from poverty and oppression and for human freedom

we will confront the cross. There is no other way to work for the radical transformation of our world than to accept this confrontation with the cross in living out our faith and trust in the humanity of the people. To stand in solidarity with them means to be committed to building a world order "which reverses the domination of the rich and powerful, and which takes sides with the poor and other victims of man's injustice to man. God has committed himself by Covenant to guarantee the success of this historical movement." We, too, are asked to commit ourselves. This is the meaning of our religious profession. Where else will we find the truth that will make us truly free?

The Church as Institution: My faith in the people and in God was radically reawakened but what of my faith in the institution of the Church? As a religious I have made public profession to serve the Kingdom through this Church but experiencing her through the eyes of a poor community was a cause of sorrow. How relevant is the message we preach in her name to the poor? Take the issue of violence. It is easy to read a condemnation of violence as a response to the structural problems of today when we enjoy the security and protection of a convent setting and respect in the wider community. To read such a statement in the midst of men, women and children, all victims of grave institutional violence which is slowly killing their vitality and their life itself raises many questions. What gives such a condemnation credibility and validity today? Do we know what it is to experience a violation of person and life which is the lot of our people day by day? We must listen first to those who do suffer this violation and exploitation and work out *with them* our response as christians.

As Church, we have status and power. Today, it is clear that the struggle for power is the big issue for both the secular world and the Church. Life in the slum quickly showed me that neither are prepared to use that power consistently on behalf of the true interests of the poor and oppressed. Both claim to wish to do so but the people experience something different. Time and again I saw their hopes raised and then frustrated. The lesson they learnt was only too clear.

We are unwilling to take a clear stand. We are experts at compromise to protect our own interests, and this at the expense of our message. The wealthy and powerful are at home and at peace within the walls of our churches and are faithfully served by our institutions. What of the poor? Did my neighbour, the labourer at the port, feel the Church had anything to say to him? Did he feel that his family and children were served by our institutions, especially the schools?

This is my Church and after these two years I know it is not the Church of the poor or for the poor. When the institutional Church fails to be "the Church of the Poor" we make a mockery of Christ who came in utter simplicity. He rejected all status, power and compromise and confronted the rich, the powerful and the religious leaders of his day for the sake of the truth of the Kingdom. He was of the poor and for the poor.

Many people, deeply committed to standing in solidarity with the peasants, labourers and fishermen are rejecting this institution. Have we the right to judge them harshly? Perhaps it is our way of living the truth of the Kingdom and the non-human face we have given to this institution which they have rejected. We must be honest with ourselves. We christians

are called to live prophetically a freedom to risk all; that is our birthright. I wonder if we are not exchanging this birthright for the security of our institutions, for protection of our interests and a 'spiritualized' religion which does not address itself to the problems of today's world.

Religious life: When I began this way of life I found I had entered a most demanding novitiate. It meant relearning the meaning of poverty and simplicity (holding on, though, to my own toothbrush), and to being open to relationships that made demands I had never experienced before. I also began to understand how deeply related are contemplation and struggle. A prayer which is rooted in a people who cry out for life against the present darkness and evil of exploitation, hunger and fear is the prayer for today. It is a prayer which searches for meaning in the poverty and in the sense of abandonment, of helplessness and of powerlessness of a people but which finds life in a hope born of a struggle.

In our formation programs, both initial and on-going, we need to learn to search for God in his suffering humanity. We cannot be afraid of real immersion with the people. We can only be human and christian if we and our young people are steeped in a spirituality which recognizes and responds to the human, suffering face of God today. If we are so formed we will be able to make our own the struggle of God in his people. We will be prepared for the contemplation asked of a poor man on today's cross.

While I stayed in the *barrio* the people suffered an extensive fire of unknown origin destroying hundreds of homes; terminations from work, without cause; widespread evictions in the name of development; and harrassment. This was apart from the usual hunger, sickness and general deprivation which is the daily life of a slum/squatter community. These communities would like us to be with them but only as christians who do not trade in our birthright. We have to be prepared to risk all. There will be fear, anxiety and loneliness (our small participation in their unending insecurity) but I discovered that the people with whom I lived, worked and prayed are well able to teach us and to support us along the way. Being associated with the peoples' efforts to stand up in the face of these onslaughts I receive outright condemnation, distrust, indifference and some real understanding and support from the wider community. Such a varied response is inevitable but, without the continual encouragement of the people themselves, I would not have been able to continue. I learnt that it is good to trust in them.

Commitment: But do we need an experiential knowledge of the situation of the poor and oppressed people to remove our blindness, to come to an understanding and to make a commitment? I think we do. Communication at the level of words is so limited. Only if we accept the invitation 'to come and see' we will be able to understand. It is a very real invitation that we are being offered. The experience will certainly question the authority and leadership role that we, 'their betters', have confidently assumed because a world and a Church fashioned by the poor and oppressed will not be the world we are used to with our middle-class values and myths. Our present world and a world of equality and brotherhood cannot coexist.

Today, we are slowly but surely moving towards a horrific confrontation between the super-powers which is taking place with an utter disregard for the real interests of the people - the workers and peasants. We have to overcome our sense of powerlessness and make an option to stand with the poor and oppressed in their struggle for a radically transformed tomorrow marked by justice, freedom and brotherhood. With or without us, the people will walk the wilderness, the arena of this struggle. To make this commitment to the poor means that we talk with them and accept their invitation to "eat at their table".

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

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## CREATING A NEW MISSIOLOGY FOR THE CHURCH

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Simon E. Smith

*(Quatre théologiens se sont rencontrés récemment au secrétariat missionnaire des Jésuites Américains pour discuter des orientations futures de la mission. Voici un compte rendu de leurs délibérations).*

What would happen if one were to invite a few creative theologians from different parts of the world, say one from Asia and another from Africa, etc., to sit down together and start to share with each other their vision of what a missiology for the future would look like?

What if a couple of these folk were to be themselves missionaries and a couple more the recipients of former missionary care? What, furthermore, if one invited each of them to critique our current theories and methods in mission and then challenged them to come up with a viable alternative?

Well, it happened. For a week together at Maryknoll in New York at the beginning of September, four very different and supremely capable individuals started a process to create a contemporary Catholic missiology.

Fr. Ngindu Mushete of the diocese of Kinshasa, Zaire, editor of the Bulletin of African Theology, who has been doing some rather creative writing about the mission of the church in Africa and the challenge of inculturation, was the first. He was joined by Fr. Aloysius Pieris, sj, of Sri Lanka, editor of Dialogue, director of a Center for the Encounter of Christianity and Buddhism, a world-renowned expert on Buddhism and a prolific author.

Then there was Fr. Juan Hernandez-Pico, S.J., a Basque who has spent most of his Jesuit life in Central America, particularly in Guatemala, and who has pseudonymously authored some very creative pieces of theological reflection on the present suffering of God's people in Central America. Finally, there was Fr. Eugene Hillman, C.S.Sp., a professional missiologist, a long-time missionary to the Masai in Kenya and Tanzania and author of several books flowing out of his experience.

The mix was rich; the participants previously unknown to each other. So the first order of process was to spend over a full day just "telling each other's story": the personal history, the formative influences on one's life and thought, one's personal and theological priorities, etc.

Once those seeds of mutual understanding and trust were planted, the group then spent a period of time critiquing both contemporary and historical theories and practices of missionaries. That laid some groundwork, then, for the real work of the week, which was to start to outline (and eventually flesh out) a whole new approach to mission which would serve for decades to come.

First there was the question of airing some commonly-held presuppositions which would underlie any fresh theory. They were, for example, that the present theoretical models of the conversion of infidels and even of "implantation" of the church are quite inadequate (for many reasons which the participants spelled out to their mutual satisfaction); that proclamation today is more likely to be effective when it takes the form of dialogue, particularly with people who already have their own faith-convictions which must be revered; that our world is culturally pluriform and will remain so despite all efforts to homogenize cultures by technological and other overlays; that Christ is the sacrament of God, a concept which (when spelled out in detail) renders less absolute a great deal of our common thinking about the necessity of salvation in and through Jesus alone.

In addition to explicating these and other presuppositions, the four participants in this mini-conference also agreed on some essential points of departure in their thinking and writing which are necessary if a new missiology is to be realistic and credible. They said, for example, that the fundamental point of departure is the option for the poor of today's world. They also said it would be folly to proceed without a clear historico-social analysis of any situation before taking action. Their view of the kingdom, the church, Jesus and God was also spelled out so that each of them saw clearly the theological bases from which each would proceed.

With all this more or less in place, they then addressed the basic problem of starting to articulate a theology of mission which would take account of the reality of the world, of the beliefs of other peoples, of the vast cultural differences which each continent presents, etc.

The basic comprehensive goal of mission is, they said, to promote and serve the unification and healing of our divided, wounded humanity through bearing the burdens of all and through sharing resources, with full respect for humanity's invincible cultural pluralism. That sounds maybe a bit flowery or too rhetorical. But it is packed with implications which

will radically change the way missionaries behave and the very people who are considered missionaries. For example, the agent of this "mission," as described above, is not necessarily a foreign missionary nor even a cleric or religious. Further, the solidarity which this "unification" calls for will look different in each continent: for Latin America it will be a solidarity against oppressive domination, for Asia it may be a solidarity amid the density of religious pluralism, for Africa it may be more a fraternity within and across autonomous cultures.

But what does all this have to do with being a missionary? How does it alter or modify the missionary's behavior? The four theologians suggested that the missionary of the future will be interested in helping people, of whatever culture, re-tell the story of Jesus in their own way, using their own myths, metaphors, etc., and will be less worried about the orthodoxy of that re-telling. The actual agents of that re-telling are more likely to be the indigenous peoples themselves, not foreigners and probably not theologians. And the shape of the Jesus story will not be the same everywhere. In Latin America Jesus will be seen as liberator, in Asia as taraka (the guide across the river), in Africa as the great ancestor.

A corollary to the above is that the missionary will go out to discover the seeds of the kingdom (not "to bring Christ") in another place or people or culture and will himself participate in the growth toward the kingdom which is already underway there.

Well, the four theologians have gone their way, but not without first committing themselves to writing this new missiology. It will take a year or more and when they come back together again in 1983 they will attempt to synthesize their respective reflections and offer to the church a challenging, fresh theology of mission.

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## TALKS ON MARRIAGE

Fr. G. Taylor

*(À la suite du Synode des Evêques sur la famille on constate un intérêt croissant pour la façon de comprendre le mariage dans la culture et le contexte africains, ce bref compte rendu souligne les changements qui affectent aujourd'hui la conception du mariage en Afrique).*

### CHANGES IN OUR SOCIETY AND THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

The aim of this chapter is to pass in review changes which have taken place in our society e.g. emancipation and independence of women, money economy, new social frameworks, unification of customary law, new marriage code etc. and see how they have influenced the outlook on marriage, marriage relationships and problems concerning marriage.

Traditional marriage: To generalize about traditional marriage even in one country of Africa, let alone the whole continent, is both difficult and dangerous: generalization is always falsification. Still marriage and family life in Tanzania has some general characteristics. It is with these that we deal here with the restriction that all that is said will not refer to every group of people in the country.

The extended family: Anthropologies distinguish between two main types of family i.e. the nuclear family and the extended family. Generally speaking the traditional type of African family is the extended family.

The nuclear family: In the nuclear family the family unit is reduced to husband, wife and children. These small family groups are interconnected but autonomous. Where the nuclear family prevails there is no theoretical limit to kinship: it is more or less identified with biological relationships. There is no distinction between the descendants of one's father's or mother's group e.g. between parallel cousins and cross cousins. Inheritance is usually in the direct line and may pass through either the paternal or maternal line or both.

Marriage symbolism centres on the going away of the bridal pair.

Wedding gifts are made to furnish the new home. (I) According to the Germanic tradition however an important part of the wedding ceremony is the giving away of the bride by her father or uncle.

The Extended Family: In the extended family the family unit consists of a fairly large group of people related by descent in one line from a living (or recently dead) common ancestor. These family groups are composed of several households which operate as an entity rather than independently. There is among them a spirit and practice of co-responsibility and corporate action.

The extended family group is a lineage group either patrilineal or matrilineal. There is therefore a big distinction between descendants of the father's or the mother's group i.e. between parallel cousins (called brother and sister) in the horizontal line. (1)

Marriage symbolism centres rather on the beginning of a new life together. (2)

Bridewealth is a form of compensation of the girl's parents and a way of ensuring the stability of the union. By bride-service again the girl's parents are compensated and the young man is made to prove himself able and ready to look after the girl he intends to marry.

Marriage: Alliance between two families as well as two individuals:

In an *Introductory Essay* by A PHILIPS to the *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life*, this author writes: "In seeking to identify the outstanding characteristic of African customary marriage, we may justifiably include a reference to the collective aspect of the marriage transaction and relationship." (3) Marriage is an alliance between two families as well as between two individuals. "*Marriage is not just an affair of two individuals alone; it brings together families, relatives and friends from each side of the partnership.*" (4)

Choice of the partner: Since marriage is a family concern the elders have a very big say in the choice of the partner for the children of marriageable age. On this important issue there are many, customs, methods and procedures which Deacon J. MBITI summarizes under three headings: the marriage is arranged by the parents; the choice is made partly by the partners and partly by the parents; the marriage candidates themselves make the choice and then inform their relatives who start making betrothal and marriage negotiations. (5)

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(1) Cfr. *Ethnographical Survey of Africa*, Part XVI, *The Matrilineal Peoples of Eastern Tanzania* by T.O. BEIDELMAN.

(2) In the Patrilineal system an important part of the wedding ceremony is the introduction of the bride into the paternal group.

(3) Cfr. p. XV; also *African Systems of Kingship and Marriage* edited by A.R. RADLIFFE-BROWN and DARYLL FORDE, p. 46.

(4) Cfr. J. MBITI, *Love and Marriage in Africa* p. 44.

(5) Cfr. J. MBITI o.c. p. 50-53.



The second and third of these systems are more suited to the needs of the present than the first.

Selection of the Spouse: But whoever makes the choice this choice is limited by what, according to the feelings, customs and judgements of a social group, is seen as unsuitable and so prohibited or as of special value and so preferential.

Generally speaking marriage within the lineage group is prohibited: one must marry outside the lineage group. This is known as exogamy. Marriage is also forbidden with certain members of other kinship groups related by marriage i.e. affines. The affinity is usually not only direct but also secondary but regarding this prohibition there are many variations.

Generally speaking the type of marriage considered as being of special value and so preferential is that which reinforces an existing system of family relationships e.g. levirate marriage, widow inheritance, sororate marriage and cross-cousin marriage.

Widow Inheritance: Widow inheritance, not to be confused with Levirate marriage-in which a man takes the widow of his deceased brother who has died without children in order to raise up children in his deceased brother's name: Gen. 38:8 and Deut. 25:10--is the marriage of a widow to her deceased husband's brother or other relative. It is connected with the protection of widow and of the children of the deceased and with bridewealth. The brother in law or other relative takes over the position of husband to the widow and father to the children.

Sororate Marriage: This means either that for a sterile wife her sisters substituted whose children are counted as those of the former or that when a wife dies she is replaced by her sister.

Cross-Cousin Marriage: This is a marriage between a descendant of a man i.e. his son or daughter and a descendant i.e. son or daughter of that man's sister. These children being of different lineage groups are cross-cousins. Cross-cousin marriage was practised among the Wabena, allowed among the Waha, customary among the Wakara and also found among the Matrilineal people of Eastern Tanzania.

There are also traditional bars to marriage the most common being impotence, certain sicknesses, certain traits of character, witchcraft. There are various in this matter between different groups of people.

Purposes and Benefits of Marriage: There are many but the main one is to have children. Procreation is seen not simply as something of great importance, not simply the object of an ardent desire but, generally speaking, as something essential to the marriage union. It has a social dimension since it carries on the family and also a religious dimension since it contributes to the continued life of the ancestors. Hence it can come about that partners to a sterile marriage are not always free to accept the situation. "In our traditional

society, where procreation is at the centre of marriage, a childless marriage can become a most painful and embarrassing situation in life and our traditional attitudes and philosophy make it extremely hard for a childless marriage to be successful and happy." (6) In spite of the centrality of procreation, traditionally marriage has other benefits and purposes.

Bridewealth: Traditionally one of the features of the marriage alliance is the transfer of bridewealth. However it is important to note that among the Matrilineal people bridewealth was not transferred, or was small but in more recent times this custom has become more and more established among these peoples.

Bridewealth is explained as having three functions viz: an indemnity to the family of the girl; transferring of certain rights over the girl and her children from her own family to that of her husband; and to cement the alliance between the two families joined by marriage. Thus payment of bridewealth has been described as a kind of marriage certificate and return of bridewealth as kind of divorce certificate. The fact that bridewealth, once received, was either shared out among the members of the bride's family or used for the marriage another member of this family made it less easy to recover and so it was not returned for slight reasons: in this way it served as a stabilising factor in marriage.

Bridewealth was not meant to be a source of wealth, a way of acquiring wealth. Unfortunately with the change in the system of economy and the growth of materialism bridewealth has tended to become a means of acquiring wealth and so has been raised to exaggerated sums.

It was not necessary to pay all the bridewealth at once: it could be paid in instalments over a number of years.

Brideservice: This means that the bridegroom himself has to work for his bride. This involves residence for a period of time, generally speaking, near the future parents in law.

Wedding Ceremonies: Of these there is a fascinating variety: they tend generally to show separation from the family and union i.e. the beginning of new way of life together.

Consummation of the Marriage: This is certainly a necessary part of the wedding ceremony among very many of the peoples of Tanzania. It shows that the partners can be together as man and wife. Refusal can be taken as a sign of lack of consent.

Equality in Marriage: Men and women, because of the difference of sex and rooted herein, have different roles to play in society. The man is the protector and the provider and this casts him in the role of head and leader. He is also head and leader of the family.

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(6) Cfr. J. MBITI, o.c., p. 42-3.

He does the work which requires most strength and is the hardest. He is responsible for the security of the family. He has to solve the problems.

The woman bears the children and cares for them. She keeps the house and must see that meals are prepared and that the house is kept clean. She does not try to step into the shoes of the man because she knows that it is not her place. She does not put herself on the same footing as the man and interfere in his affairs.

But when it comes to considering the rights of the woman there is a marked difference in the patrilineal and matrilineal systems. In the patrilineal system the wife is very much bound to her husband's family: she was even inherited. As far as the basic marriage rights are concerned i.e. rights to common life and sexual relations the man and the woman are not on the same footing since the man can take another wife and live with two at the same time whereas the woman cannot have two husbands at the same time.

In the matrilineal system the wife enjoys greater freedom since she is not bound in the same way to her husband's family.

Divorce: Generally speaking divorce was possible though not necessarily a common occurrence. It was only permitted for weighty reasons e.g. gross adultery by the woman, gross dereliction of duty, chronic sickness making married life impossible.

It was a long process since all attempts at reconciliation were made before the separation was made final. It was done, often, extra-judicially i.e. within the family.

Polygamy: Traditional marriage was, generally speaking, potentially polygamous i.e. a man could have more than one wife at the same time.

The following quotation states well the way in which the nature of polygamous marriage was understood traditionally together with the reasons for and some of the values of polygamous marriage.

"Marriage is a general term that describes various kinds of conjugal relationships, these types of relationship have a common thread, namely a ~~covenant~~ between two persons whereby they declare their commitment to each other as husband and wife. This covenant according to African concept may be monogamous or polygamous. This ~~covenant~~ is seen much more clearly in the monogamous system than in the polygamous one. However, it should be pointed out that even in the polygamous families this covenant is real.

Covenant in polygamous families is a bond between two people, the husband and each of his wives. This type of marital relationship is analogous to friendship, for in the latter form of relationship a person is free to have as many friends as he can and yet his relationship to each of his friends is unique but not exclusive. Similarly in the traditional African marriage which were polygamous, the husband sincerely felt that

each of his wives was that of husband and wife. To the traditional African, conjugal relationship was, in a manner, analogous to friendship, viewed as capable of being realized among various persons (wives) and not exclusively tied up with one person (wife) as we note in monogamous marriage.

This concept of marriage was adhered to, religiously guarded and implemented. To the African there was no doubt about validity of this form of marriage. It was not only accepted by the husband but also by the wives who even promoted it for example for the purpose of spacing children. In some African societies the wife sometimes suggested to the husband the idea of getting another wife: this is analogous to a friend suggesting to another friend the idea of getting another friend.

The foregoing removes a certain misconception pertaining to the nature of polygamous marriages as practised in Africa. Polygamy in Africa was not practiced to give expression to lust. Rather polygamy had social and economic dimensions. In Africa the social status of a person was intimately tied up with the number of wives and children he had. Those who had many wives and children earned great respect in their respective communities. Such were destined to live for ever, they perpetuated themselves among their children even after physical death. So the more wives and children a person had, the more he was in a position to be certain of his immortality. Furthermore the bigger the household, the greater was the possibility of carrying out mutual assistance with regard to material and other needs, for the household was characterized by corporate existence. Father Shorter puts it this way: "A man's prestige and position within polygamist will have many more children than the monogamist. Polygamy also caters for widows within patrilineage and ensures that women for whom bridewealth was paid will be retained as mothers for future children of the lineage. Polygamy has other advantages. It ensures that all the women of the community are materially provided for, there being no means by which an unmarried woman could find support in traditional African society."

Hence it should be clear that polygamy was not practiced to prevent prostitution on the part of the husband though this goal was implicitly obtained. Rather the practice of polygamy was effected as a praiseworthy value in the community because it was the sign of a person's ability. A person who could have many wives and children and maintain them showed that he was not only the ideal family man but also a person who could be a leader in the community. This is evident from what we know of our former old chiefs. They had many wives. To gain the right to lead the community it was necessary to display the ability to run a big family...

It should be noted that in traditional African life having a big family and keeping it stable were correlatives. Divorce was rare. Even when a wife was barren, which was often the cause of divorce, a person married another wife who bore him children and in this way the barren wife's predicament was relatively removed. When the husband was sterile his brother bore children for him and so solved the sterile man's problem. In this way the family remained stable...

It should not however be thought that the traditional African poly-gamous family had no problems. On the contrary there were jealousies and quarrels among wives and children. Yet despite these problems these poly-gamous families had a stability that has not been achieved by many modern monogamous families." (7)

Trial Element in Traditional Marriage: Statements are made which point to the existence of a type of trial marriage in some traditional societies. "In some traditional societies it is accepted that a young man and girl would live together to see whether out of what relationship they can contract a marriage." Thus writes Deacon J. MBITI (8) and he goes on to say "But modern African also has trial marriages in which a man and woman live together, mainly in towns, for a length of time to see whether a more permanent type of marriage can come out of it. In some cases a marriage takes place, but often the union ends up in complete separation each party now going on to have another trial with someone else perhaps." (9)

Element of Growth in Customary Marriage? Statements are made which point to an element of growth in some traditional marriages: these statements indicate not simply a growth in personal relationship of being truly husband and wife.

"Africans see marriage as beginning in totally different way. For them the beginning of a marriage is a growing process comparable to the liminal phrase in a rite of passage (*diachronis*). This process may be interrupted if the partners prove incompatible, or if the essential conditions such as fertility appear not to be present. This interruption is not regarded as divorce or dissolution, but simply as the recognition that a marriage has been attempted but has not come into existence." (10)

"In other cases where marriage is a long process, part of the marriage arrangements include the living together of husband and wife until a child (or more) is born and then the marriage is formalized and its process finalized." (11)

"Unlike European marriages, the African variety is not legalized in a few minutes. There is no one moment of time that can be accounted as deciding its full institutionalization. African marriages occur as a process over a long time and often over several years. It is even arguable that marriage is not necessarily fixed ultimately by the birth of a child... A significant step towards realization of the marriage is made when the bride leaves her family and enters her husband's house or when the man enters the woman's. This can be seen as the point where the marriage proper begins. But even in this phase the marriage is still under test. Only with the gradual payment of bridewealth, the accompanying ceremonies, and the birth of children, is the bond gradually confirmed and a stable marriage thought to develop." (12)

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(7) Bishop J. NJENGA, Customary African Marriage in AFER, XVI (1974) no.1 and no.2, p. 115 & ff. (8) Cfr. o.c., p. 196. (9) Cfr. Ibid. 6 p. 13 & ff. (10) Cfr. A. SHORTER, Notes on Traditional and Christian Marriage in Africa, CROMIA/II, p. 21. (11) Cfr. J. MBITI, o.c., p. 196. (12) Cfr. J.F. THIEL, The Institution of Marriage: An Anthropological Perspective in Concilium, vol. 5, no.