



We have just received PATHS OF LIBERATION: A THIRD WORLD SPIRITUALITY by Mgr. Bakole wa Ilunga, Archbishop of Kananga, one of the Resource Persons at the recent SEDOS seminar on Justice and Evangelisation. Published by Orbis Books, it originally appeared as *Chemins de liberation* by Editions de L'Archidiocese, B.P. 70, Kananga, Republic de Zaire.

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NEXT ISSUE OF SEDOS BULLETIN

TUESDAY - APRIL 30

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HAPPY EASTER TO ALL OUR READERS

BUONA PASQUA!

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## JUSTICE IN THE PROPHETS

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Horacio Simian-Yofre, S.J.

*Voici la IIIème Partie d'un texte abrégé d'une présentation de "La Justice chez les Prophètes" faite par le P. Sunian Yofre, pendant le cours de troisième an des SVD à Nemi. Dans son conférence il traite d'abord de la nécessité d'être attentif lorsqu'il s'agit de traduire du grec ou de l'hébreu en anglais, le concept de justice, déjà assez compliqué et difficile d'interprétation. D'où la nécessité d'aborder le texte avec un coeur ouvert et réceptif, et non avec des questions particulières déjà explicites. Il examine ensuite un choix de textes de Jérémie, Michée, Isaïe et Osée et dans cette IIIème Partie il tire certaines conclusions sur la façon de comprendre la Justice chez les Prophètes.*

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### III. THE PROPHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF JUSTICE

Let us attempt to sum up the main traits of the conception of justice offered to us by the Old Testament in the few passages we have briefly considered here.

Ancient Israel manifests a concern to set up a juridical corpus, a body of laws and norms, which will make it possible to safeguard institutions, especially the administration of justice. This is done in the consciousness that the correct functioning of the courts of the city means the defense of the weakest. At the same time it sets limits to the potential arbitrariness of the king.

This emphasis on the juridical organization of the nation and its religion, an organization which ought to have been conducive to a life of harmonious relationships, showed itself on more than one occasion to be illusory. The accounts of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, which can be read in the book of Numbers, are in large part the history of this people's infidelity to the dispositions and decretals which, according to biblical tradition, they had only just received from God. Nor will the history of Israel from the time of Solomon on show a different picture. Israel's laws demonstrate their incapacity to deliver what they promise. Despite the goodness of the legislation itself, ultimate responsibility for the just functioning of society rests with the individuals and groups who accept or reject it. It is probably fair to assert that Israel's prideful, tragic flaw was to believe that his wonderful legislation ("What great nation

is there that has laws and customs to match this whole Law that I put before you today?" Moses asks in Deuteronomy 4:8) was sufficient of itself to assure that nation's salvation.

The mission of the prophets, on numerous occasions, is to set in relief the grave and continuous insult to the basic points of this Law: the defense of the weak and the oppressed before the iron heel of the mighty, the wealthy the unjust authorities. The prophets denounce less-than-official instances of authority, too, however, such as court prophets, or venal priests -- who in spite of their influence, dare not raise their voices to demand a remedy for this situation.

For the prophets, then, just relationships are in large part dependent on the influential, the powerful, those in authority. The prophets know that a certain balance of power among the parties is a plus when it comes to fostering just relationships -- which will then be forthcoming from necessity and convenience, if not only from virtue. Correlatively, injustice is directly proportional to the inequality of the parties concerned. This is why although the prophets so frequently inveigh against injustices already committed -- also mightily condemn, if less frequently, concentrations of wealth and power, whether of individuals or of nations, that open the way to new injustices.

The prophets are aware that the corruption of the influential and powerful leads to the corruption of the lowly and eventually to the destruction of the whole of society. Hence the prophetic condemnations are not levelled against evil individuals alone. Nor do the prophets criticize primarily and per se the two great institutions of their time, the temple and the monarchy. But they do see and denounce the structures of corruption in society. These may well originate with individuals. But at a given moment they become independent of them, and begin to constitute an objective evil rooted in society itself. From that moment on, it is all but impossible to resist their corruption. The prophets are not anarchists, or revolutionaries in the extreme sense, but they certainly are not conformists when it comes to a conception of justice and injustice. They are far from the misconception that justice and injustice reside in the wills of individuals alone. Rather, the good or evil that each one does has its repercussions and influence on the whole body of society.

When the prophets threaten a national castigation in the area of politico-military relationships for crimes that are largely "private" -- oppression of the poor, luxury beyond all bounds, and the like -- they are demonstrating that no hard and fast line between the private and public, between the individual and the social, exists for prophetic thought. Justice's space is unitarian and homogeneous. The interaction between the seemingly private and the public is total.

Therefore the prophets do not dawdle over a casuistry or codification of multiple and varied individual relationships -- of master and slave, employer and wage-earner, family member, officers and soldiers. It suffices to lay down a single paradigmatic comportment: that of powerful king or judge vis-à-vis powerless subject

or plaintiff. All rules for just comportment are laid down in this one relationship. The justice that Yahweh demands of the king toward his subject is the same as he demands of the master toward his slave.

This is why the prophets are not explicitly interested in a "structural reform" of society. They are convinced (Yahweh's conviction) that the human intelligence and heart will find current societal structures adequate if only they will accept the basic principle of societal co-responsibility -- of the responsibility of the stronger for the weaker.

There is an element of profound realism here and an acute perception of social psychology. Human reality is such that there will always be some who are more powerful than others. There will always be some who are more intelligent, or more persuasive, or more imaginative, or more enterprising than their fellows. And so the problem of justice cannot find its ultimate solution in a utopian equalization of human qualities. The ultimate solution of the problem of justice will be found in the persuasion on the part of individuals and groups that it is their inalienable responsibility to take the weakest into their care.

Since injustice is so closely bound up with the various forms of power, the prophets insist on Yahweh's preference for the little ones, the defenseless. He identifies with them and they trust in his intervention to heal the corruption afflicting them.

Concrete Intervention of Yahweh: How do the prophets concretely imagine that Yahweh's intervention in favour of the needy will take place?

Some passages seem to expect some manner of apocalyptic intervention on Yahweh's part. But prophetic realism relies mainly on the very history of peoples for the castigation of groups and nations that allow themselves to be swept away by unjust leaders, by governors who are disloyal to God's word.

The prophets view the danger of a foreign enemy as a punishment for Israel's unfaithfulness -- punishment of a nation that has placed all its confidence in political means.

First, Isaiah attempts to convince the King by means of reasonable arguments (Isaiah 7). But then he explicitly threatens him with the danger represented by Assyria (7:17). In Isaiah 10:5, Assyria is spoken of as the very lash with which Yahweh chastises Israel. (Assyria itself, for its part, will then be castigated for its own excesses.) In Jeremiah 6:22-26, the historical punishment which threatens is tinged with apocalyptic. But the danger is a concrete one, and is to be punishment for concrete injustices. The reader will recall the Jeremiahan passages examined above.

Doubtless the prophets did not imagine that a foreign invasion would suffice for the re-establishment of an order of justice. On the contrary, it was possible that internal injustices would actually increase under the protection of favouritism and the pressure of agreements struck between the forces of occupation and their subjects.

But in the face of a situation of such broad corruption, the prophets foresaw no solution -- and perhaps indeed there was none -- except total destruction, so that everything might begin all over again.

Indeed, could there have been any other solution to the extreme decadence and corruption of some of the great Western monarchies but the revolutions that put an end to them?

Biblical Understanding of Justice: The biblical understanding of justice is so solid, basic and simple; it includes the following features:

- An intimate connection between power and riches, and injustice.
- Yahweh's resultant predilection for the weak.
- The responsibility of the mighty toward the weak.
- The influence of individual injustice on the body of society.
- The consequent co-responsibility of injustice.
- Knowledge of Yahweh as dependent on the practice of justice.
- Consequently, the obligation of justice toward one's neighbour as first among human responsibilities, hence as antecedent even to the duty of worship.
- Yahweh's re-establishment of the order of justice, at determined moments, and severely, by means of historical processes.

As we have shown, the prophets do not consider it their obligation to establish precise norms for particular cases. They know that those who allow the truths they preach to permeate their bones and blood will find the just path in the concrete event -- the proper, adequate reaction for each particular case.

Jesus' teaching is the prolongation of that of the prophets. He refers to the received religious tradition in Israel as "the Law and the Prophets". But he goes a step further. The prophets have established their demands with the Law in brackets, as it were. They prescind from laws, they make no mention of them, they do not discuss them. Jesus on the contrary, proposes himself as the interpretative principle of the Law. But his interpretation is only exemplary. It is not exhaustive. Jesus does not limit his demand--that he himself be acknowledged as the ultimate norm of the Law, that he be regarded as the principle governing the Law itself -- to the few laws explicitly interpreted in the New Testament. If "man is the measure of all things", then a Christian will insist, even more, that there is no basic law, in the Church or in society, other than the word and action of Jesus himself, the perfect Image of the Father.

Like the prophets before him, Jesus refuses to establish a new code of norms. It is difficult indeed to decide, with the Gospel in hand, whether democracy or monarchy is the political theory more in accordance with Jesus' teaching -- whether liberal or state-controlled economics is the more adequate theory for a people to develop its whole potential -- and so on. But we can certainly decide, with the Gospel in hand, whether such and such a particular regime or

concrete economics is achieving its purpose of being at the service of the community.

Complexity of Modern Society: It goes without saying that the mechanisms and relationships of modern society are enormously more complex than those of the first-century society in which Jesus preached the Good News. A modern state that would seek to replace all its legal codes with the Gospels, or the Old Testament (or, while we are speaking along these lines, the Qur'an) would be found to be without adequate instruments for the fruitful organization of the life of the nation.

Nevertheless, the totalizing demands of the Christian faith give us the assurance that all aspects of national life, the multiple confrontations and collisions of international relations and a fortiori the disagreements of individuals and small groups, ought to be able to be judged by the yardstick of the Gospel. If this were not the case, Christianity would have to renounce its just claim to offer not only a "path to heaven", but -- inextricably intertwined with that -- a path upon earth.

Sacred Scripture thwarts our efforts to use it as a catalogue of behavioural norms, handed down identically from generation to generation, and timelessly normative in their immediate content.

Sacred Scripture is given to us as the living Word of the living God, when its text, inspired by God but anchored in a bygone historical moment, is received by the community of faith under the inspiration of the same Spirit who presided at its composition, and who enables us to read both the present situation and the ancient word and set them in mutual confrontation. The text of Sacred Scripture should sharpen the reflection, and the response for today, that God seeks to stir up in the reader by means of these passages.

Our immersion in the word which we accept as the Word of God means ultimately that we are trying to enter into a different universe from our categories today -- a universe where power, wealth, might, and beauty are not definitive values -- in fact are not values at all. This is perhaps the final, the most decisive, word that Scripture has to say to us on the subject of justice: that our efforts to build a new world will never be anything but -- at best -- naive babbling, until we really make up our minds to enter into this other universe, this true universe of justice. This is probably how we should read the parable of the eleventh-hour labourers in Matthew 20: 1-16: not as a defense of the most liberal concept of the right to property, but as a statement that there is an order of justice in which the "latecomer", the "new arrival", the handicapped person, the person who needs a "head start", the foreigner, the member of another race or religion or sex, has the same rights as the person whose rights are already established. But this order is intelligible only in the universe of Jesus crucified.

## A MOI LA PRIÈRE

Raymond Rossignol

*(Père Diogène Ligeon of the Paris Foreign Missionaries was not unique in insisting on the importance of prayer. This short reflection captures the spirit of prayer which sustained and inspired one of the great missionaries of that Society living in the 19th century in Pondichery. We can elaborate plans, undertake projects, work out detailed programmes for action - and pray God to bless the lot while losing sight of the truth that the Mission is God's work and that our plans, in fact, may not be in accordance with his will. We pray that God's will may be done and then determine ourselves the choice of methods. The source of evangelisation is Jesus and our dynamic involvement in it has its source in prayer and meditation. So it was for all the great founders. We need to remind ourselves of this fairly constantly.)*

"Maintenant, à moi la prière, à moi l'oraison et la pratique de la pénitence!" Cette exclamation, quelque peu provocante, est attribuée au Père Diogène Ligeon (1819-1889), missionnaire en Inde, dans la région de Pondichéry.

Quelques jours plus tôt, il était arrivé dans le village de Vailamur, "le bâton à la main, les pieds nus, suivi d'un serviteur qui portait toute sa fortune sur sa tête: sa chapelle, quelques vases de terre et un peu de linge". Il s'était présenté au chef du village et lui avait expliqué qu'il cherchait un endroit isolé pour s'adonner à la prière. Celui-ci l'avait pris sous sa protection et l'ayant amené à "deux portées de voix du village, lui avait indiqué un terrain vague parsemé de palmiers et de dattiers". Avec des branchages et de la boue, le Père Ligeon s'était construit un abri pour lui-même, une chapelle "sur le modèle de la crèche de Bethléem" et une hutte pour servir de cuisine et de résidence pour son compagnon.

C'est alors que, selon son biographe, il se serait dit: "Mon installation ne laisse plus rien à désirer. Maintenant, à moi la prière, à moi l'oraison et la pratique de la pénitence!" Il s'agit en fait d'un projet missionnaire. Le Père Ligeon mise sur la prière et la pénitence.

Quelques mois plus tard, "Dieu fut touché: une bonne âme se fit baptiser, puis une autre, puis plusieurs autres...mais il ne tarda pas à voir que le démon n'entendait pas rendre les armes sans combat" (A. Launay, *Histoire des Missions de l'Inde*, vol. IV, p.458 et suiv.).

Le Père Diogène Ligeon est l'une des grandes figures missionnaires du siècle dernier. Il comptait avant tout sur la prière et l'ascèse pour atteindre le coeur des non-chrétiens. C'est un exemple parmi beaucoup d'autres. L'histoire des Missions abonde en grands apôtres qui furent aussi des ascètes et de vrais mystiques. Ils ne concevaient pas d'activité missionnaire qui ne soit enracinée dans la prière.

Qui d'entre nous, d'ailleurs, n'est pas convaincu qu'il existe un rapport de proportion entre prière et efficacité missionnaire? "Ca ne



marche pas; c'est parce que nous ne prions pas assez", ou bien l'inverse: "Il a fait un travail merveilleux; il est vrai que c'était un homme de prière." L'exemple du Père Ligeon, (ces analyses, quelque peu rapides) nous renvoie à l'essentiel: C'est le Seigneur qui est le Maître de la Mission. La Mission est l'oeuvre de Dieu. Il ne peut y avoir d'efficacité missionnaire si Dieu n'intervient pas. Il faut donc faire appel à Lui.

Mais il y a plusieurs façons de concevoir l'intervention de Dieu et de faire appel à Lui.

Je puis former des projets, prendre des initiatives, programmer mon action et demander à Dieu de bénir mon entreprise. Ce faisant, j'ai peut-être oublié que la Mission est l'oeuvre de Dieu et que mon projet n'est pas nécessairement conforme au sien. A mon insu, je suis peut-être en train de demander à Dieu d'entériner ma volonté. Je prie, certes, pour que la Volonté de Dieu arrive, pour que son Règne arrive; mais j'ai moi-même déterminé les moyens et choisi les méthodes sans chercher d'abord à mieux connaître sa volonté et à vérifier mes intentions, dans la prière.

C'est sans doute par là qu'il fallait commencer. En tant que missionnaire, je suis l'envoyé de Jésus. Je me devais donc de chercher d'abord à harmoniser mes projets avec les siens. "Hors de moi, vous ne pouvez rien faire" (Jn 15,5), nous dit Jésus. Cette mise en garde se rattache à la parabole de la Vigne. Jésus ne parle donc pas seulement de la nécessité d'obtenir son aide pour être efficace. Il a parlé de la sève qui véhicule la vie, d'un lien organique.

Si donc je veux faire oeuvre utile, en tant qu'envoyé de Jésus, je dois m'assurer que je suis solidement relié à lui par un lien vital. La prière me permet de vérifier l'existence de ce lien, d'en mesurer la solidité, de le consolider.

Dans la prière, je puis chercher la volonté de Dieu, lui soumettre mes projets, vérifier mes motivations. Gageons que lorsque le Père Ligeon se lançait dans cette aventure de la prière à temps plein, il faisait cela, non seulement parce qu'il y voyait un moyen d'obtenir des conversions, mais aussi, et surtout, parce qu'il avait compris dans la prière que Dieu l'y invitait.

"Notre dynamisme d'évangélisation a sa source dans la prière, la méditation, et non pas dans des techniques d'évangélisation, des "outils" par ailleurs nécessaires." (Colloque de Théologie missionnaire de Francheville, *Spiritus*, No. 94, p. 96)

Prier pour que Dieu bénisse notre activité missionnaire est une excellente chose. Mais prier de telle façon que notre activité missionnaire soit le fruit de notre prière est mieux encore.

Ref: Echos de la rue du bac, No.193, Mars 1985. Société des Missions Etrangères, 128, Rue du Bac. 75341 Paris.

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**"SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND  
THE OPTION FOR THE POOR"**

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*(From an article by Fr. Albert Nolan, OP. in "Briefings"  
(June/July, 1984).*

In our reflection on service of the poor and what this means, and how it should develop, I see a real development that goes through stages in much the same way as the stages of prayer. In commitment to the poor, there is a spiritual experience that goes from crisis to dark night, and light.

Fr. Nolan distinguishes four stages in the development of commitment to the poor.

The first stage is characterised by compassion - which leads to what we call relief work, collecting and distributing food etc. It can lead also to a simplification of our life style.

The second stage begins with the gradual discovery that poverty is a structural problem, a political problem; - it leads to indignation, or, more bluntly, anger; - it raises the question of forgiveness, or loving one's enemies; - it leads to the desire to work for social change.

The third stage develops with the discovery that the poor must and will save themselves - and that they don't really need you or me; we begin to realise that the poor know better than we do, what to do and how to do it; they are perfectly capable of solving structural and political problems; - it can lead to a crisis within - possibly a deep conversion; - we discover the poor are His chosen instruments:- the hazard in this stage is romanticism - putting the poor on a pedestal - 'they are always right'.

The fourth and last stage centres around the experience of solidarity with the poor and the oppressed; real solidarity begins when it is no longer a matter of we and they; - this can become an experience of solidarity with God's own cause of justice - an experience of solidarity with God in Jesus Christ.

- We need to understand that we and the Church are all going through a process, a spiritual development, a growth and a struggle. We're in it together and we need to help and support one another. Let us help the process, encourage it, struggle with it in ourselves because, today, it is the only way we are going to come closer to God and be saved.

Ref. "Briefings". June/July, 1984. Catholic Information Service  
England. Quoted in Intercontinent, SCMM, 645 Washington Blvd.,  
Baltimore, Maryland 21230, U.S.A.

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**"THE HOUR HAS COME"**  
**THE UNIVERSAL MISSIONARY DUTY OF LATIN AMERICA**

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*(En vue de la célébration du 5<sup>ème</sup> centenaire de la Mission en Amérique Latine, le document suivant a été envoyé de Bogota, à tous les Evêques de la Section des Missions du CELAM, le 13 août 1984. Il est signé par Mgr. Prospero Penados de Barrio, archevêque de Guatemala, Président de cette Section, et du Secrétaire, le P. Oscar Osorio Jaramillo MXY.*

*Ce document constitue un développement dans l'orientation missionnaire des Eglises d'Amérique Latine, à la suite de l'appel de la Conférence de Puebla: "L'heure est désormais venue pour l'Amérique Latine, d'aller vers les nations, au-delà de ses frontières. Il est vrai que nous mêmes nous avons besoin de missionnaires, mais il nous faut donner de notre propre pauvreté". A Puebla, les évêques se sont engagés à la mission "ad gentes", convaincus que s'ils attendaient pour donner aux autres de n'être plus dans le besoin, ils ne le feraient jamais. Nous remercions le Père William Halliden SSC, de sa traduction de l'espagnol. N.D.L.R.).*

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**I. SIGNS AND POINTERS**

**Sharing the rich gift of Faith:** In a few years' time we shall be commemorating the fifth centenary of the mission in Latin America. This occasion should fill us with gratitude to the Lord for the gift of Faith in Jesus Christ who has made us members of his Church. It should also make us think about the demands which the gift of Faith makes on us, perhaps now more than ever.

What have we done with this Faith and how are we bringing it to the immense mass of human beings who do not share it?

We are reflecting on this at the end of the second millenium of the Christian revelation. The evangelisation of Latin America is one of the most important missionary ventures of the Church in the twenty centuries which began at Pentecost and which she has maintained to our day under the sign of the Cross and of hope. In Asia and Africa this dynamism has received a new impetus in the last hundred years and has been taken up again by the Council and by recent Popes.

**Signs of the times:** The Second Vatican Council invited us to study the signs of the times so as to know better the will of God concerning the Church for our generation. These signs challenge her at all levels:

the birth of new nations and Christian communities in Africa and Asia; the shift in the influence of Catholicism from north to south; the geopolitical influence of the Pacific over the

Atlantic; the weakening of the missionary drive from the traditionally mission-sending countries and the difficulty many of them have in doing effective missionary work because of the colonial crisis.

At the same time we note an increase of vocations, including missionary vocations, in the so-called Third World. The Church today is becoming more aware than heretofore of the new importance and opportunities of evangelisation among the peoples of Africa and also of Asia which at the end of this century will hold 65% of the world's population and only 7% of the world's Catholics.

Latin America - the "Bridge": These signs are a particular challenge to the Churches of Latin America which will soon hold about half of the Catholics of the world. Ibero-America, being a bridge between the Christian West and the Third World, can thus be the great hope of the Church, provided that its contribution to the universal mission, in giving freely the Faith it has freely received, is in proportion to the number of its believers. In this context the words of Puebla acquire their full force: "The hour for Latin America ... to go beyond its own frontiers, 'ad gentes', has finally come. It is true, we ourselves are in need of missionaries but we must give from our own poverty" (Puebla, 368).

Saving others we save ourselves: We know that what we do for the mission beyond our own borders, "ad gentes" will be a grace of interior renewal for our own Churches and that in saving others we shall save ourselves and the future of our Faith. The Latin American Church will pass from being a Church which has always received to being one which gives generously from its poverty. And we shall leave behind the weaknesses of a Church which is accustomed to receive only but not to give.

## II. OUR MISSIONARY WITNESS

We note with joy and encouragement how the Churches of Africa and Asia, some of which are much poorer than we are, where Catholics are in a minority and in need themselves, are already sending missionaries to other countries even poorer in the Faith (Uganda, India, Korea, Philippines etc).

Beginnings: We are happy to have taken our own first steps in the mission "ad gentes" which we should like to see extended to all the countries and dioceses of Latin America: the Missionary Institutes of Mexico and Colombia which have already a long tradition; the "Sister Churches" programme in Brazil which is extending itself more and more to other continents and the beginnings of a mission in the same sense in Chile... Much has already been done but more remains to be done.

A renewed missiology: witness, not conquest: We can respond to our call to universal mission with confidence in the Holy Spirit and in what he has done in our Churches. We can go "ad gentes" with humility but conscious also of our contribution to a missiology renewed according to the mind of the Church: a mission not of "conquest" but of "witness" to Jesus Christ and of service to his Kingdom, in which what we can give is not the

impact of our culture and power but the richness of our religious and evangelical experience.

The experience of our people: The missionary witness of our churches, as has always been the case, will be centred on the Good News of Christ and his universal lordship, which bring fulfilment to every person, to every people and to the whole human condition. Such a missionary witness would wish to share the rich religious experience of the Latin American people, their popular piety, their devotion to Mary and their spiritual traditions.

Preferential option for the poor. This missionary witness would combine its experience of God with a preferential option for the poor and for their integral liberation, which for us is such a significant dimension of mission and which from our experience would be an element of all missionary work.

Every culture a "locus" of incarnation: Our present missionary work has been enriched too by the integration of culture with the process of evangelisation in Latin America. In the measure in which we have learned to evangelise cultures, making each one a "locus" of the incarnation of the Gospel, we come to understand better that our witness to the message of Jesus among our believers includes also the incarnation of the message in those cultures.

### III. THE LOCAL CHURCH, SUBJECT OF MISSION

Each diocese: The missionary and ecclesial witness of Latin America with the riches which God has given it, is summed up in the new Catholic awareness of the meaning of our local Churches. The root of the impulse "ad gentes" is found in the conviction that each one of our dioceses, new and old, in need or not, developed or not, epitomises the universal Church and its missionary imperative. The Catholic theology of the local Church is essentially missionary. The diocese is the subject of mission, for it; its projection "ad gentes" is part of its vitality and maturity.

Local communities: We need to incorporate the universal mission more in each local Church, in its parishes and communities since "the grace of renewal cannot grow in communities unless each of them expands the range of its charity to the ends of the earth and has the same concern for those who are far away as it has for its own members" (Ad Gentes, 37).

A Force for Unity: We sincerely believe that the fidelity of the Latin American local Churches which go "ad gentes", despite their own poverty and even their serious need, will be for them, not only a factor of renewal, but also of unification of their different options and of their pluralism, which are sometimes in so much need of reconciliation and synthesis. Mission is the great unifying force in the Church. It integrates pastoral policies which may seem contrasting, e.g. concern for the poor, the marginated, non-believers, as well as those dimensions of the Kingdom whose promotion is the *raison d'être* of the Church.

The service of the Kingdom not only unifies the legitimate pluralism of the local Churches but unifies as well the direction and object of mission. Since the Kingdom which we announce is at once a reality within every person, a reality which is expressed in societies and cultures and in the Church, mission means communicating the experience of God as interior liberation, humanising societies and cultures, incarnating the Church and offering full salvation, all at the same time.

#### IV. COMMUNION AND PARTICIPATION BEYOND OUR BORDERS

The Puebla Conference invited us to consider evangelisation from the point of view of communion and participation. Today we must recognise the profoundly missionary implications of these central dimensions of the mystery of salvation which is realised in history and is leading to the definitive eschatological revelation of the Kingdom of God. These key concepts are impoverished if they are not understood in their universalist meaning.

(1) Ecclesial communion: local and universal: The Council spoke of the communion of people with one another and with God. This communion, desired by God, is achieved not only in every ecclesial community, not only in the relation which must exist between local Churches, but must be directed to the whole of humanity, to all persons and to all peoples. The universal Church, vitally present in every local Church, signifies and realises this mystery in history.

Communion inseparable from mission. This missionary understanding of the mystery of universal communion, established by the death and glorification of the Lord Jesus, is to be seen in the whole of the New Testament, from the missionary command to go and make disciples of all the nations (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15), to the eschatological vision in which men and women of every race, language and nation will share in the reign of the Lamb (Apoc. 5:9-19 etc.). It is to be seen in the writings of the first Fathers of the Church and in the practice of the different local Churches of the first centuries. Communion between these Churches is inseparable from the mission "ad gentes" since it includes the rôle of founding new Churches (cf. Clement of Rome, Letter to the Corinthians, 41:4; 42:1-4 etc.).

(2) Participation: local and universal. In the same way, the idea of participation has a meaning which is realised not only in the local Churches and in the countries of one continent, but in the universal mission as well. The desire of every Christian and of every evangeliser is that all persons and peoples would share fully in the salvation of Christ.

Response in freedom : Just as the Holy Spirit offers to all a sharing in the Paschal mystery (G.S. 22), it is also certain that this sharing demands a free and intelligent human response, the commitment of the entire self to the living God (Dei Verbum, 5).

The different peoples express in their different religions, cultures and societies not only an experience of God but also an experience of sin. If our Church is particularly aware of the social manifestations and

structures of sin, which diminish freedom, cloud the conscience and disfigure human dignity, it cannot be indifferent to the impact of the same mystery of iniquity on the vast sectors of humanity who do not know Christ.

An Active Sharing: We want for those brothers and sisters of ours who are as yet unevangelised not merely a "passive" salvation, but rather an active sharing in the mystery of Christ, in which they themselves will become the evangelisers of others. The idea of sharing can be the new way of expressing the urgency of universal missionary activity.

An option for the poor, the doubly poor: Our option for the poor must be open to our brethren in Africa and Asia who are doubly poor. If Puebla called attention to the situations in greatest need of evangelisation in our own continent (nn. 365-367), our Church also must recognise that there are missionary situations even more necessitous in Asia and Africa. The capacity of our Churches to evangelise the peoples of our continent is bound up with the will to go beyond our own borders; home mission and foreign mission strengthen each other mutually in the life of the Church.

#### V. "FROM OUR POVERTY"

We feel we are poor because we lack the personal and material resources needed to go out on mission. We feel we are poor because in general we lack a missionary tradition. We feel we are poor in face of the great pastoral problems which press upon us. But in all this we cannot allow ourselves to be guided by merely human criteria. The wisdom of the world suggests that we should wait until all the human groups in our continent are evangelised, until our Churches are self-sufficient, before we undertake a mission to other continents. But the logic of the Gospel is different. It urges the young Churches, even though they have not enough personnel of their own, to play their part as soon as possible in the universal mission (A.G. 20).

Risking: In that context, Puebla urges us to intensify our missionary efforts "ad gentes" immediately, without waiting for an ideal time when there will be neither risks nor sacrifices. Puebla asks us "to give from our poverty".

God's way: the way of the poor: This attitude of giving from poverty reflects the way of God in the history of salvation. He chooses the little and the weak as his collaborators. This attitude invites us also to adopt missionary models which are simple and therefore more evangelical. It means looking at reality with different eyes, with the eyes of the poor. The poor, the little ones, know how to wait. They know how to be happy with simple things; they know how to confide in a power which comes not from themselves but from God.

## VI. SOME CRITERIA OF ACTION

Not only the Council and the Puebla Conference ("the hour has come") but recent Popes too, from the "Fidei Donum" of Pius XII to the "Evangelii Nuntiandi" of Paul VI and the "Postquam Apostoli" and other missionary messages of John Paul II, have urged us to take up our missionary duty "ad gentes". We must get involved in mission; we must send out missionaries. For this there are some criteria from the age-old wisdom of the Church which can help us:

The Local Church: Not the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples nor the Pontifical Mission Works nor the missionary Congregations, necessary though they are, can substitute for the duty of every local Church, nowadays more necessary than ever. Its responsibility is all the greater now that the Ibero-American Church represents almost half of the Catholic world.

The Bishop: For this reason the mission "ad gentes" should form part of the ordinary pastoral action and of the pastoral plans of our local Churches and of our Bishops' Conferences. This implies effective missionary animation, taken up and coordinated by the Bishops.

The clergy: The subject and protagonist of the mission "ad gentes" is the local Church, all of it, and all its communities and ministries, especially the Bishops and the clergy, since the missionary mandate is based on the same gift of priestly ordination and on the corresponsibility of the Bishops of the whole Church (Fidei Donum).

Effective alternatives: Every local Church, every Bishops' Conference, according to their different conditions, must choose the best ways to have missionaries sent out. The Church offers many possibilities and alternatives:

- the establishing of missionary seminaries and missionary institutes;
- making agreements between dioceses;
- the association of priests, religious and lay people with missionary institutes already in existence;
- sending of missionary teams etc.

Our limited resources demand that we attend to the quality of the missionaries we send by preparing them carefully. In selecting peoples for evangelisation, preference should be given to those which are really not Christian. Among these Asia and Africa should have a special place. The mission "ad gentes" demands a serious and long-term commitment which will allow for necessary incardination with enough time for the Faith and Christian communities to grow in those cultures.

### CONCLUSION

We humbly offer these reflections for the consideration of our Bishops and faithful. They will help us to prepare for the Fifth Centenary of the evangelisation of Latin America. It would be a further grace from the Lord if, having received so much, we could



give more to other continents which are calling us: "Come over... and help us" (Acts, 16:19). It would also be an authentic way of assuring the renewal of our local Churches and of fostering more vocations for them as well.

The Virgin Mary was present at the first beginnings of our evangelisation. She will be present too at this new juncture, giving us the missionary dynamism of Pentecost and showing her love for all peoples.

Próspero Penados de Barrio  
Archbishop of Guatemala,  
President, Department of Missions,  
CELAM.

Oscar Osorio Jaramillo, MXY.,  
Executive Secretary.

Ref. CELAM Bulletin, Bogotá, September, 1984.

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"NON TUTTO IL MALE VIENE PER NUOCERE ..."

CONSIDERAZIONI SULLE ESPULSIONI DEI MISSIONARI DAL BURUNDI

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*(Since 1979 almost 150 missionaries, women and men, have been expelled from Burundi. Fr. Gabriel Ferrari, Superior General of the Saverian Missionaries has recently visited the members of his society still in Burundi, 26 of whom were expelled. In this letter, which he has kindly allowed us to publish, he describes and reflects on what he saw in some of the parishes and missions which they had staffed. These still remain without resident priests. Lay catechists and leaders of communities together with Burundi religious Sisters have taken over responsibility. There is a dynamic Church life and good organisation. He noted an awakening of self-confidence and of involvement in the Christian community. The future of the Church is in the hands of the local priests, religious and laity.*

*Fr. Ferrari asks whether the expulsions have not been a real blessing? The Church has been purified of triumphalism and has lost much of its 'temporal' legacy dating back to colonial days. Clericalisation of the Christian community has been brought into question. There has indeed been pain and suffering, even death. There are many signs of a vigorous rebirth.*

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Quando si parla della pastorale missionaria, ma anche della pastorale in genere, una delle lamentele più facili e più diffuse è quella che si riferisce alla "clericizzazione" della comunità cristiana.

Per quanto lo si dica e lo si ripeta, è poi molto difficile essere capaci di fare quei passi concreti, anche minimi, che potrebbero ovviare alla situazione o orientare verso una pastorale in cui i laici abbiano un posto significativo e reale. La presenza del sacerdote offre tali vantaggi che difficilmente vi si rinuncia. Ad essa è legata la

facilità di avere i sacramenti, un consiglio, un sostegno, tutti benefici questi cui la comunità finisce poi per abituarsi e non valutarli più nel giusto senso.

Insieme ai benefici ci sono anche degli aspetti deteriori, prodotti o meglio sottoprodotti, che dovrebbero renderci attenti a non consolidarli. Uno di questi, forse il più serio, è che, finché è presente in modo permanente il prete, è difficile che sia promossa una pastorale di cui i laici siano - insieme al prete - soggetti responsabili e attivi in prima persona, in modo efficace a non solo decorativo.

In realtà è facile che il prete con la sua presenza influisca e determini ogni scelta ed ogni attività laicale che resta così segnata dal marchio clericale. Non intendo parlare qui della caricatura del prete "tuttofare" che vuol essere dietro ad ogni iniziativa, che non lascia spazio ai laici, più o meno coscientemente ritenuti dei "minorenni" incapaci di responsabilità personale. Questo fatto è molto visibile e presente anche nei cosiddetti territori di missione, dove il ridotto numero non favorisce (è un paradosso, ma mi sembra realtà) la crescita e l'affermazione di un laicato maturo e responsabile.

E' una delle mie convinzioni più forti e più provate che "la virtù è frutto di necessità" e che cioè le affermazioni di principio, fossero pure della suprema autorità della Chiesa, non si eseguono che quando ci si è costretti o da qualche causa esterna più forte della nostra pigrizia o da un complesso di circostanze storiche tali da impedire il ripetersi dei vecchi clichés.

Questo è avvenuto nella Chiesa del Burundi, un paese dell'Africa centrale, dove a partire dal 1979 sono stati espulsi quasi 150 missionari e missionarie e dove un'intera diocesi, quella di Bururi, è stata "ripulita" dalla presenza dei missionari stranieri. Parecchi posti di missione sono rimasti senza missionari e sono ora in mano dei catechisti laici e delle suore locali.

Durante l'ultima visita che ho potuto fare ai Confratelli che ancora restano in Burundi, ho avuto tempo ed occasione di andare a verificare 'sur place' la situazione di due comunità cristiane che sono rimaste senza missionari: Murago che è rimasta senza preti dal novembre 1981 e quella di Minago che è nelle stesse condizioni dall'agosto scorso. In quest'ultima sono arrivato la mattina della domenica 17 febbraio per celebrare la messa; l'avviso che sarei arrivato non era giunto; all'ora del primo servizio domenicale (7;30) la chiesa era quasi piena di gente di tutte le età che era stata al mercato e che attendeva l'inizio del servizio domenicale presieduto quella mattina dal catechista Barnabé ed animato - per i canti - dalle suore. Celebrai la messa; mi pareva di essere ai tempi in cui ero parroco di Minago.

Alla fine della messa nella lettura degli avvisi mi resi conto che tutto funzionava ancora: dopo la messa ci sarebbe stata la riunione del consiglio parrocchiale, poi quella della caritas locale, nel corso della settimana sarebbero venuti i bambini del catechismo e del corso di alfabetizzazione ... e fu letto anche l'elenco delle

ragazze che il sabato avrebbero scopato la chiesa. Mi spiegarono che il Parroco di Rumonge (30 km di distanza) veniva una volta alla settimana per i cristiani, due volte al mese per i matrimoni. Per il resto ci pensavano i catechisti e le suore che fanno il turno per tenere aperto l'ufficio della parrocchia e per far la guardia nella casa dei Padri, rimasta vuota.

Dopo la messa salii a Murago, ad una trentina di chilometri in mezzo alle montagne, dove da una settimana si trovava il Vescovo Bernardo Bududira. Questi mi diceva che aveva confessato oltre ottocento persone, aveva fatto un corso per i catechisti, e quella mattina avrebbe celebrato la Confermazione di oltre trecentocinquanta adulti. Tutto meno che una chiesa morta! L'assemblea eucaristica era affollatissima, animata dai canti della Corale di Busaga, una succursale cui era toccato di intervenire in quella domenica. L'assemblea era attenta e ben ordinata. Si vedeva che il vescovo l'aveva in mano, ma si vedeva anche che i catechisti, i capi delle comunità di base l'avevano ben preparata.

Sono così tornato a casa convinto che questa triste storia delle espulsioni dei missionari, che fa tanto soffrire noi e particolarmente gli espulsi, finirà per essere uno di quei "colpi maestri" della Provvidenza che fanno andare avanti la chiesa più di anni di lavoro. In questo tempo si è visto la bontà del lavoro fatto in mezzo ai cristiani del Burundi.

Ma soprattutto si deve ammettere che questa storia dolorosa ha purificato la chiesa da ogni tono trionfalistico, le ha tolto il potere "temporale" ereditato, e non ancora perduto, dall'epoca della colonia, per ridarle tutto il suo ruolo di servizio e quindi un altro potere morale; sono nati nuovi ministeri, veri e non solo decorativi, propri dei laici; molti cristiani sono ritornati alla pratica fervorosa della vita cristiana che avevano abbandonato nel tempo di pace.

Il frutto più bello - secondo me - è che i preti, i religiosi locali hanno preso coscienza che la chiesa del Burundi è la loro chiesa e che il suo futuro dipende dai ministri locali. Certi uomini di governo quando hanno visto i locali prendere il posto dei missionari espulsi, avrebbero commentato: "Ma allora non c'è alcuna differenza tra i primi ed i secondi". Basterebbe questo per giustificare il titolo che ho dato a queste considerazioni: "Non tutto il male viene per nuocere".

Non mancano anche gli effetti negativi dell'assenza dei missionari, ma mi pare che alla fine i vantaggi che ne sono venuti sono molto più significativi degli svantaggi. Ed allora mi augurerò che il governo continui sulla strada delle espulsioni? Non oso farlo, ma sento che c'è ancora del bene che Dio saprebbe trarne. E fedele ai miei principi, attendo ... la necessità.

Roma, 2 Marzo, 1985.

P. Gabriele Ferrari, SX  
Superior General Saveriani,  
Viale Vaticano 40. 00165 Roma.

- fine -

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JESUS' REVOLUTION

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The hungry and the thirsty  
 the homeless and the strangers  
 the captive and the ailing  
 the outcasts

they are the new social class of the Gospel  
 Jesus's own aristocracy  
 His own incarnation  
 for the day of judgement --  
 the last of them all

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THINGS ULTIMATE

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Place me, like a seal, on your heart  
 the writings are finally fulfilled to the letter  
 even those about the seal and the heart

John's head  
     on my heart  
         like a stone

how can one carry the weight  
 how can one shed the ultimate things

the last kiss  
     will be given by a traitor

the last draught  
     will be gall

the last sensation of the heart  
     will be the piercing of the spear

and the stone of the tomb will be sealed

*(Ref: Things Ultimate and other poems by Janusz-St. Pasierb,  
 London, Poets' and Painters' Press, 1980.  
 Translated by Charles Lambert).*