



NEWS

SPIRITUALITY OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY: Fr. John Fuellenbach, SVD addressed a large gathering of SEDOS members on 13th March on some basic elements of the Emerging Spirituality of Liberation Theology. The talk was part of a series of meetings on the theme of Liberation Theology. As a follow-up, SEDOS is planning a panel discussion to study the new Document on Liberation Theology that was released by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 5th April. An abridged version of Fr. Fuellenbach's talk on the Emerging Spirituality of Liberation Theology is presented in this issue of the Bulletin.

NICARAGUA UPDATE: On March 18th a group of SEDOS members including Superior Generals who had just returned from visitations in Nicaragua held a meeting at SEDOS. This meeting was initiated by participants at the first Solidarity in Crisis Meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to share current information and experiences of the situation in Nicaragua and to explore ways of responding.

SOLIDARITY IN SITUATIONS OF CRISIS: SEDOS and the J & P Commission of the UISG/USG co-sponsored the second meeting on this topic which was held on Wednesday, 26th March. In the first part of the meeting Sr. Helene O'Sullivan MM, of SEDOS examined with the participants concrete steps to be taken in the event of the disappearance or death of a member of one of our congregations.

Fr. Willie Van Frankenhuijsen SMA, of the Justice and Peace Commission of the UISG/USG facilitated the exchange of experiences and ideas on the impact of such a crises on the Congregation involved.

As a follow-up to this meeting, a small group will work on proposals for a solidarity network among religious congregations that will be activated when members are arrested, disappeared or murdered. The proposals will be presented during the Villa Cavalletti Seminar on Third World Theologies, May 6-10.

NEW SEDOS MEMBERS: We welcome the Pallotines (Societas Apostolatus Catholicici) who have joined us as members of SEDOS. The Rector General is Fr. Martin Juritsch, SAC, and their address Piazza S. Vincenzo Pallotti, 204, 00186 Roma. Tel. 6799974.

---

SOME BASIC ELEMENTS IN THE EMERGING SPIRITUALITY OF  
LIBERATION THEOLOGY

---

John Fuellenbach, SVD

*(La théologie de la libération a-t-elle donné naissance à une spiritualité particulière? Selon le P. John FUELLENBACH, SVD, une authentique spiritualité de la libération, solidement fondée sur l'Écriture est en train de se former en Amérique Latine. Les trois éléments principaux de cette spiritualité sont:*

- *l'imitation du Christ historique tel qu'il se présente lui-même dans l'Évangile dans ses activités de guérison et ses miracles et dans ses attitudes vis-à-vis des pauvres et des marginaux;*
- *l'expérience de la vie parmi les pauvres comme source de notre engagement pour la justice et la solidarité.*
- *l'amour qui s'exprime sous forme de miséricorde et de compassion. Compassion veut dire aller là où les gens souffrent et rester avec eux dans leurs souffrances avant de commencer à faire quelque chose pour eux.*

- *La spiritualité de la libération se situe au milieu des remous de ce monde, plutôt que dans la sécurité et la tranquillité. Elle touche tous les aspects de la vie et se forme quotidiennement d'après les expériences vécues d'un chacun.*

---

INTRODUCTION

One of the basic claims of Liberation Theology is that it wants to be regarded as a new way of doing theology, a new way of talking about God and a new way of understanding and reading the Bible. It claims to provide the correct key to unlock the Bible as a book of life for our time.

Liberation Theology is an attempt to answer the crucial question of how to evangelize, how to transmit the Christian experience in a society dehumanized by injustice. It is an attempt to preach the gospel in a way that frees people, preaches the coming of the Kingdom and also the human growth of the poor and oppressed. In the process it generates those Christian attitudes, motivations and values which permit Christians to cope with these challenges. (Galilea:189). If Liberation Theology is sound theology then it must be able to help people to understand and to deepen their faith, their compassion and their love. The ability to develop a true Christian spirituality might be the real test that will prove the worth of the endeavour known as the Theology of Liberation.

HAS LIBERATION THEOLOGY DEVELOPED A PARTICULAR SPIRITUALITY?

Spirituality is not easy to define but with S. Agundo Galilea I would say it means: "to live by the Spirit according to the Gospel

and to follow Jesus Christ with the help of the Christian community." (Galilea: 190) This of course will have its value for any culture and any time and it is in no way peculiar to any kind of Theology. Any valid spirituality will always stress the all important values of love, contemplation, prayer, asceticism and self-denial and ultimately a predilection for the poor and the needy. It will have a vertical as well as an horizontal direction.

But can one then really talk about a specific spirituality? We do distinguish between monastic, medieval, Eastern spirituality and therefore, it should be justifiable to talk about a spirituality of Liberation Theology. The common basis for these different spiritualities is that the gospel experience is lived in different cultures and different life situations which demand different responses from people.

#### THE BASIC EMPHASES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY

There are different elements stressed by the different authors of Liberation Theology but I think we can single out three that emerge in all of them: the historical Jesus; lived experience with the poor; love expressed in terms of mercy and compassion.

##### 1. THE HISTORICAL JESUS

Vatican II insisted that the essence of any discipleship of the Lord must be a following of him as he presents himself in the Gospel (P.C. 2). This is regarded as the supreme norm for every christian, religious congregation and community. The historical Jesus and the central theme of his message are the determining factors of Liberation Spirituality. The reasoning for this is the following:

- The activity of Jesus during his historical and earthly ministry can be defined as a "SACRAMENT" of the Kingdom in its fullness and definitiveness which makes itself visible in human history. Sacrament of the Kingdom means a SIGN PREGNANT WITH THE REALITY OF THE FUTURE FULLNESS OF THE KINGDOM, as the dawn is the sign of a new day.

The Kingdom as a present reality makes itself visible to us on two levels: on the level of Jesus' activity and on the level of his behaviour.

JESUS' ACTIVITY: On the level of Jesus' activity, his miracles demonstrate that God wants to restore the brokenness of human existence and to let us participate in his own life. Healings as well as exorcisms demonstrate the presence of God's Kingdom in the world now as "integral, all-embracing salvation".

JESUS' BEHAVIOUR: On the level of Jesus' behaviour the criteria of the Kingdom become incarnated and are made visible. In relation to God (i.e. vertically) Jesus lives as the Son with a total dedication to the Father who is everything to him. In relation to

God (i.e. vertically) Jesus lives as the Son with a total dedication to the Father who is everything to him. In relation to human beings (i.e. horizontally) he welcomes sinners, behaves like a servant, puts brother and sisterhood over and above religious cult, subordinates the law and sacred institutions like the Sabbath to the physical welfare of concrete persons, disregards all qualifications that arise out of the social status of persons, including the past of those persons, and demonstrates that every human being has a future to look towards.

The historical Jesus remains absolutely necessary for us in order to experience concretely what it means to live the Kingdom now by following him. Any spirituality must orientate itself to Jesus and his central message. True conversion includes the same attitude of Jesus towards the poor, the outcast, the rich, the powerful - the compassion and commitment with which he offered integral liberation.

The Role of Mary: This relevancy of Jesus' humanity becomes possible in Latin America because of an increasing familiarity with the Gospel. In the same line Mary, the Blessed Mother of Jesus, so highly esteemed in Latin America, takes on a new role. She is primarily seen now as THE true disciple of Jesus and devotion to her could become a real incentive for a liberation spirituality.

In the Midst of the World's Turmoil: Commenting on the spiritual life Bernard of Clairvaux insisted that the place from which our spiritual nourishment must come is the place where we ourselves think, pray and work. Gutierrez in his book *WE DRINK FROM OUR OWN WELLS* refers to this quotation and points out that it is from "our own well" that we must drink in Latin America. This well is located within the liberation process to which we are committed. The Spirituality of Liberation Theology is therefore located in the midst of the world's turmoil, rather than in a safe haven of retreat. It touches every aspect of life and it draws on the daily concrete experiences of its practitioners. That leads us already to the second basic element of spirituality.

## 2. THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE POOR AND NEEDY

The concrete experience of life among the poor is the source from which a real concern for justice and solidarity emerges. Our first reaction most probably will be compassion which will move us to action. The discovery of a compassionate God whom we want to follow is a great step in this spirituality. In the commitment to the poor we discover that compassion was the driving force in Jesus' concern for us, it was what moved him, what lay at the core of all his action. The Bible uses this word 12 times in connection with the suffering, distress and sorrow which affected the people whom Jesus encountered. His reaction to these predicaments is compassion, meaning that he 'suffers with' people before he heals them.

The poor become the place where we discover God's compassion, his predilection for them and the mystery of the poor that God has chosen them to be his agents for the salvation of the whole world. The experience of living with the poor leads to a deeper understanding of Jesus and the central message of the Kingdom which is, first of all, a message meant for the poor. This is what Puebla meant by saying the "Poor also evangelize the Church." They make it easier to find God, to understand the Gospel and to purify our prayer.

Four Stages of Growth in Commitment to the Poor: Albert Nolan in a talk on "The service of the Poor and Spiritual Growth" distinguishes four stages of a commitment to the poor:

First: Compassion emerges out of exposure to suffering and misery which in turn moves us to ACTION be it to relief work or to the simplification of our own life style.

Second: We discover that poverty is a STRUCTURAL PROBLEM based on particular social and political situations manufactured by humans which create oppression and injustice. Our reaction is ANGER and INDIGNATION about it, in particular with the rich and with politicians. We must master our anger and come to see that it is the system that must be changed. We are all victims, the rich included.

Third: We come to discover that the poor themselves are PERFECTLY ABLE to save themselves and that they do not need us to save them. We have to LEARN FROM THEM rather than teach them.

Fourth: We move from DISILLUSIONMENT and DISAPPOINTMENT with the poor to true solidarity. The realization has to be made that the poor are not saints and the rich sinners. The problem is structural. Once we come to discover that the cause of the poor is God's own cause we will be able to overcome the feeling of disillusionment and disappointment which we will experience with particular poor people once we are involved with them.

### 3. LOVE EXPRESSED IN TERMS OF MERCY AND COMPASSION

The greatest value of any spirituality is of course love. But love must express itself in terms of compassion. Compassion in its original meaning means as we saw; to suffer with, to go where it hurts, where people suffer and to be with them in their suffering before we do anything for them. It means ultimately solidarity with them in the way Jesus showed solidarity with them. As we cannot understand the poor without Jesus neither can we understand compassion independently of Jesus' own compassion. The demand of the Gospel is most accurately expressed in the demand of Jesus: "You should be as compassionate as your Father in heaven is compassionate." In the measure that we come to discover God's own compassion for the poor, in that measure our way of prayer, contemplation and meditation will grow because we will come to discover who God really is. Many have commented that there is a growing awareness and realization in Latin America of the need for true contemplation and prayer in order to discover the Lord in the poor and the poor in the Lord. And so

there is a genuine spirituality emerging based on a sound biblical foundation.

S O U R C E . . M A T E R I A L :

- A. Nolan,                   The Service of the Poor and Spiritual Growth
- S. Galilea,                 "The Spirituality of Liberation"  
The Way 25 (1985) pp. 186-194
- G. Gutierrez,             We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual  
Journey of a People. Orbis; New York (1984).
- D. Couturier,             "The Capacity to Promote Justice"  
Human Development 6 Number 3 (1985) pp. 34-40
- M. Oliva,                 "Developing a Christian Social Conscience"  
Review for Religious 42 (1983) pp. 585-90

- end -

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF ISLAM AND  
CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS, BIRMINGHAM , UK.

*8TH INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL ON ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY*

*This ten-day event offers an opportunity for Muslims and Christians from many parts of the world to meet together and gain a deeper understanding of each other's religions. Participants are not expected to be specialists in religious studies, but to be willing to discuss openly their commitments in a spirit of mutual respect and trust.*

*Application as soon as possible to:*

*Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations,  
Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham B29 6LQ, UK.*

---

 A THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN A SECULAR SOCIETY
 

---

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

*(Trop souvent, les chrétiens comptent sur l'exercice du pouvoir institutionnel pour marquer leur présence dans la société. Mais comment vivent-ils dans des situations où cela leur est refusé. Les chrétiens chinois vivent dans cette situation depuis la fin de la période coloniale. Des cas semblables existent dans des pays à prédominance musulmane. S'appuyant sur des expériences vécues, Robert SCHREITER nous propose quelques aperçus sur celle des prêtres-ouvriers en Europe et sur le vie de Charles de Foucauld. La "présence chrétienne" n'est pas un pis-aller pour un chrétien, mais elle peut-être la seule voie possible dans de nombreuses situations missionnaires.*

I have been asked to address the question of developing a theology of Christian presence in a secular society, with special reference to the situation in China. It seems to me that Christians too often rely or fall back upon an exercise of institutional power to make their presence felt in society, and we have much to learn from those situations where power is denied or presence is ignored. Chinese Christians have to face that question since the end of the colonial period of the Church. They face the challenge of being both constructive members of Chinese society and faithful members of the Church. They witness to both the building up of China and to a fidelity to the Gospel.

The reflections which follow are intended as an offering to the discussion on how Christian presence is exercised in a secular society. I believe that the experience of Chinese Christians has much to teach the rest of us. As local churches, we need to share experiences in faith as a way of each living out in fidelity the calling given to us in Christ.

This presentation is in three parts. The first tries to explain what is meant by Christian presence, and especially what Christian presence is not. In the second part, two historical models of Christian presence in a secular society will be explored. In the third part, we will move to giving expression to a theology of Christian presence.

What is Christian Presence? Calvin E. Shenk has summarized it as follows. First of all, it has meant a form of Christian witness through action rather than words in de-Christianized situations, such as among the working classes of Northern Europe.

A second use may be found among the World Christian Student Federation members, beginning in the mid-1960's. Here, presence meant going beyond confronting people with the Gospel message in the usual proclamatory fashion, and trying to communicate the message more by

being with the people being evangelized.

Presence has also gained currency as a way of describing the lives of Christians who witness silently in countries where any form of propaganda or direct proselytism is forbidden by law. Muslim theocracies and state socialist countries are examples of these kinds of settings. Here only actions may speak.

A fourth way of understanding presence is to see it as a response to the opportunity to live the Christian life and engage in Christian witness without depending upon the support of large institutional presence, particularly the institutional power of colonial structures.

Shenk concludes that if one examines these four approaches carefully, they all seem to have emerged from negative criteria; that is to say, they are reactions to previous situations (a Christendom model of the Church, an aggressive propagandism, the instrumentality of colonial power), or an inability to use preferred means of witness (the cases of Muslim theocracies or state socialist systems). Given such criteria, presence begins to look more like a strategy than a response to the Gospel. It necessarily makes non-Christians suspicious. It is not unlike the kinds of reactions that Christians' use of the word "dialogue" can provoke. So how ought we speak of Christian presence? It is hard to come down to a univocal concept. A better way, perhaps, is to look at what Christian presence is not.

First, it is not a second-best way to be a Christian, nor an alternative to proclamation. If Christian presence is resorted to as a kind of fall-back position when direct evangelism is not possible, presence is not really a being present; it becomes merely a stratagem meant to deceive the other. When such a strategy is employed, the implication is always that, once conditions change, the mode of Christian activity will change.

What is getting mixed up here is how Christians are part of their environment and certain missionary methods. We tend to canonize the missionary methods of recent centuries as the prime way of living out Christian witness but there have been a variety of ways of living out Christian witness in the world, some more invitational and some more confrontational. Christianity is, of course, a religion of outreach. It has a message it wishes to share. Christians root this sense of outreach in God's activity with us in sending the second person of the Trinity to become one of us. Christians believe they have good news, and that the news should be shared; it is not just news for one tribe or clan. Yet the purpose of being Christian cannot be reduced to church growth. Christian presence is first and foremost about how to live like a Christian, rather than how to make others Christian.

Secondly, it is not a passive state. Sometimes presence is used as the opposite of activity: when one cannot do something, one simply exists. Actually, Christian presence has to be understood as a very conscious way of being in the world. It is a distinctive spirituality, if you will, a decision to live in a special way within one's context. It usually involves a rejection of any attempt to rely on the church's institutional power to secure one's position. It decides not to depend upon the coercive powers of institutions to make one's point or get one's way.

Christian presence is very much a process of engagement. It grows out of a sense of who Christ is and what one's society is like. It recognizes that Christianity is of its very nature transformative, and so a completely passive or inert Christianity is really a contradiction in terms. A Christian is not just like anyone else. Christians do carry with them commitments about Christ and culture. How the Christian becomes engaged is determined to a great extent by how those commitments might best be realized. Christian presence is not an inferior or alternative form of direct evangelism; it is a way of being a Christian in its own right and with its own integrity.

It is important to emphasize the role of the circumstances in which Christians find themselves as part of the Christian presence for there are no universal rules on what constitutes Christian presence. If there were Christian presence. If there were, Christian presence could indeed be reduced to a strategy.

#### CHRISTIAN PRESENCE: TWO EXAMPLES

The two examples are not intended to represent circumstances parallel to those in China today where the Constitution permits belief in religion but does not permit proselytism. Rather they represent two points in a spectrum of the kind of society where proselytism is not acceptable. In one instance, there is a response of apathy to the Christian message; in the other instance, there is hostility.

The first example is the worker-priest movement in France in the 1940's and 1950's. Henri Godin's little book, France - Pays de Mission? raised the question whether the working classes of France had not become totally dechristianized. Godin's analysis led him to believe that the traditional forms of exhortation to reform one's life would not reach this broad stratum of French society. The fact that the bourgeoisie clung more tightly to the Church had only deepened workers' conviction that the Church had nothing to say to them. The worker-priest movement was characterised by two things in France: a commitment and a spirituality. The commitment was that if the Church wished to have meaning for the workers, it had to be with the workers in all aspects of their existence such as housing, wages, and trade unions. They worked to attain what we

would call now real solidarity with the workers. The old words in many ways no longer made sense; the actions of the worker-priests made new words possible. Now this being totally with the workers was not a stratagem. It was a life-long commitment, a way of being Christian in all integrity. They were trying to define a new way of giving witness to the presence of Christ in the world.

The worker-priest movement was suppressed in France in 1954, although not in Belgium. It has continued to be carried out in many other places, but generally not as a movement on the scale it enjoyed in France. The reasons for its suppression had to do with the political involvements of some of the priests, particularly through the trade unions.

What might this experience suggest to China? When many Chinese speak of the experience of being Christians in China since liberation, they note that the 1950's and 1960's were years when Chinese Christians had to learn to live their faith without institutions, working side by side with many Chinese who were not Christian, often trying simply to survive. While such an experience was usually traumatic and often physically painful, it brought many to a new awareness of what it meant to be a Christian and a Chinese Christian. There are no statistics which can completely reflect the full picture of the tumultuous period of the Cultural Revolution but it would seem that not only did the Church not die, but it grew stronger both in its commitments and in its numbers at a time when traditional methods of church growth were the most completely out of the question.

The second example is Charles de Foucauld. Foucauld began his life as an army officer in France, but his dissolute living led to his being dismissed from the military service. He experienced a conversion to Christianity and subsequently became a Trappist monk at Nazareth in Palestine. From Palestine he was inspired to move to a hermitage in the Sahara Desert of Northern Africa. There he lived among the Tuareg people, a semi-nomadic tribe of herders who were hostile to both the colonizing French and to Christianity. Foucauld tried to live what he called the "hidden life of Nazareth," that is, a way of utter simplicity which he felt mirrored the life of Jesus before Jesus began his ministry.

He offered the Tuaregs the hospitality of his hermitage, where he was most often found at prayer especially before the Blessed Sacrament. He was killed by a marauding band of raiders in 1916. He is sometimes called the "Apostle to the Tuaregs", even though he never made a single convert among them nor established anything beyond his hermitage.

What might Foucauld mean for Christian presence in China? Just as Jesus spent the majority of his years in the day-to-day activities of the life of a carpenter in Nazareth, a way of life that was part

of God's saving plan for us all, so, too, many Chinese experience their lives as a day-to-day struggle to secure the essentials of food and housing.

Chinese interest in consumer goods as they become increasingly available is often taken as a sign of a growing materialism. Materialism might be the case in some instances, but might it not also be a sign of their yearning to get beyond the day-to-day struggles for existence to a better life? Foucauld's prayer emphasized that there could be something more to life beyond the immediate harsh qualities of the physical environment as well.

What this suggests is that another form of Christian presence in a secular society can be a sign of transcendence, of the possibility of more than what is found in the experiences of day-to-day living. What Christians do to point to that -- their prayer, their hospitality and kindness, their continuing care of those around them -- has value as a sign which points to what sustains Christians in their joyful carrying out of their prayer and hospitality in the same living conditions as other Chinese. Put in the language of theology such Christian presence becomes a kind of sacramental presence. Christians become the sacramentum mundi, the sacrament of the world, of which the Second Vatican Council spoke.

#### A Theology of Christian Presence

In looking at these forms of Christian presence and the theologies which support them, it is important to remember that proselytism came to play no major role in either of these forms of presence. Just as Christian presence can only be carried out in concrete, believing Christians, so a theology of presence has to have a certain concreteness. I would suggest that the theology which supports Christian presence, like the believers who live it out, has to have a body and a soul.

The body of Christian presence is the form of concrete engagement which Christian presence takes on. In the case of the worker priests movement, it was becoming a worker with the workers. For Foucauld, it was living among the Tuareg as one of them, and offering hospitality. Both of the decisions taken here represent a theological stance about creation and about the presence of God in the world, about Christ and culture.

Both decisions affirm -- and I believe this to be essential to Christian presence -- that God lives in the created world as well as beyond it. For that reason, God can be discovered and engaged within that world. Where God resides is often not the place the Christian would first suspect.

The body of Christian presence finds God in the concrete, day-to-day realities around it. That body is found in engagement with those

realities. That engagement is not used merely as an opportunity to get to something else; it is taken with all the seriousness with which God takes creation. It is a reality which leads to questions of redemption: the worker-priests not only put in their hours in the factory, they came to be part of the needs for change which moved the workers.

Might not Chinese Christians find the body of their Christian presence in joining their fellow citizens in a commitment to build up Chinese society? Many in fact have already done so, but perhaps this needs to be identified more clearly as a form of Christian presence. Not everything is perfect or just in Chinese society (or it would need no building up!). But cannot God be discovered at work there too, and might that not lead Chinese Christians to a deeper transformation toward becoming more truly Chinese and more truly Christian?

The soul of Christian presence is the spirituality which sustains the body and gives it shape and direction. In the case of the worker-priest, a spirituality of solidarity in struggle and for better conditions in a more just society came about. It was a spirituality of being with the poor, a forerunner of the theology of the option for the poor of much of Latin American liberation theology today. Foucauld's presence was shaped by a spirituality of the simplicity of life in Nazareth and by the Eucharist as the presence of Christ in the desert. He relied heavily on a sense of sign which would speak louder than any preached words he might deliver.

Both the worker-priest and the Saharan spiritualities suggest strongly, however, the role of sign or a sense of sacrament (in both the broad and the Eucharistic sense) as important for giving the body shape and direction. The sign points beyond the current situation to something greater and more sustaining of a fully human (or the Christian would say: saved) existence. The sign not only points; it also tries to gather into expression the deeply felt values which come from the encounter with a God found in the midst of the world. Many worker-priests could not leave the factory behind, and Foucauld never left the desert. There were mysterious realities in both which needed to be worked out.

Chinese culture is one of the great sign-cultures of the world.

Its tradition of art and poetry apply a theory of sign in diverse and subtle ways. A theology of sign is not lost on the Chinese. It has been suggested somewhere that Christianity should be present in Chinese society as a fragrance. That fragrance, that distilled essence of a harmonious reality, is a most suggestive definition of what Christianity might be for the Chinese.

In making these suggestions, proselytism is very much in the background. If allowed to be a presence, the presence of Chinese

Christians in their society might not only lead to a deeper transformation of those Christians in their communion with Christ through their discovery of Christ in unlikely places, but also provide the rest of us some insight into embodying the message of Christ in our own secular situations. Chinese have already learned much from the last thirty-five years of their experience, experiences they have been sharing with us. They have shown us how to be a Church without power, a Church which can suffer, and a Church which can be deeply loyal to the people and to the nation without compromising the heart of the Gospel. It is hoped that these suggestions might raise some possibilities for the Chinese, so that they might in turn come to continue to teach us as well.

NOTES

1. Calvin E. Shenk, A Relevant Theology of Presence. (Elkhart, Indiana: Mennonite Board of Missions Mission Focus Pamphlet, n.d.), 3-5.
2. Lawrence Nemer, "Spirituality and the Missionary Vocation," Missiology 11 (1983) 419-434.
3. Maisie Ward's France Pagan? The Mission of Abbé Godin (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1949) contains both the text of Godin's book and an evaluation of Godin's spirituality.
4. See for example Tsao Seng-shieh, "Christian Witness in New China," China Notes 19 (1981) 166-169.
5. See for Foucauld's life Sergius Losit, Charles de Foucauld: The Silent Witness (Jamaica, New York: New City, 1966); Inner Search: Letters 1889-1916 (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979). These are given as examples. The literature on Foucauld is immense.
6. David C. Yu, "The Meaning of Religion in Contemporary China," China Notes 21 (1983) 249-250.
7. *ibid.*

(Robert J. Schreiter, C.P.P.S., is Dean of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. He is a priest in the Society of the Precious Blood, and author of a number of works, including Cosntructing Local Theologies (Orbis Books, 1985).

---

---

 EVANGELIZING SECULARIZED EUROPE
 

---

*(On 9 October 1985, Cardinal G. Danneels, Archbishop of Malines-Brussels, presented a paper on the evangelization of Europe at the 6th European Bishops' Symposium, held in Rome. The following are excerpts from this paper.)*

## 1. THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION OF EUROPE

Taking into account the great differences among the various situations in Europe (especially between East and West Europe), there nevertheless appears to be a group of values and non-values common to all of western civilization. The ground upon which the seeds of the Gospel fall therefore presents some common obstacles to their growth. It also has some points of positive reception, favourable to evangelization. One of the specific characteristics of Europe is the post-Christian situation which is found from the Atlantic to the Urals. Evangelization will therefore always be a "second" evangelization which, in contrast to the first which is progressing in many young countries, sets out from a situation of atheism or agnosticism.

Practical Atheism: This is an ever-present phenomenon, even though, at certain times, it has been moderated and even contained by social pressures. There has always been a taste for precarious and mortal goods, spiritual torpor, indifference towards basic questions -- except perhaps in the face of one's own death! There have always been resurgences of paganism. It is the practical atheism of the consumer society: in the face of the joys of "panem et circenses", how can one be concerned with a doctrine and a morality which put people on guard against the dangers of such a marvelous world? It is the cult of the immediate, and of the immediate oblivion in case it has been necessary to go through any suffering".

Human Values and their "Toxins". Western culture and civilization have, at heart, a great many basic human values. These include the uniqueness of each person, the dignity of each person, the freedom of each, the equality of all... All of this leads to the creation of a whole series of institutions which make up a society charged with promoting and guaranteeing these values.

Because these values and institutions are based on trust in man with his potentialities but also with his freedom, this system is characterized by great fragility, with a constantly lost and refound equilibrium.

This European humanism is henceforth but rarely based on a Christian vision of the world, where God is the creator and supreme defender of values. The point of reference constituted by the Absolute is missing. Now, without this point of reference, without this link with the transcendent Absolute, the European humanistic ideas and values left to themselves naturally secrete "toxins" which slowly poison the living tissue; some of these may be deadly.

New Religious Phenomena. There is also a series of new religious phenomena in the area of religion itself and of Christianity. Not all is on the verge of dying in the Church. We need only think of the "parable of unity" represented by the Community of Taizé, or the pilgrimages of young people everywhere in Europe. There is the charismatic movement, and in particular the communities of Renewal, which bring together (as the monastic communities do) Christians from all walks of life (celibates, couples, children, religious, priests). There is the revival of certain religious orders: the foundation of new religious families; the theology courses taken by an impressive number of laypeople; the success of spiritual retreats (the retreat houses are over-booked). There is also the prestige of the Church in the domain of the larger human and ethical questions and lastly the Pope's trips which gather great crowds of believers of all confessions and even non-believers.

## 2. EVANGELIZING EUROPE: HOW?

What does the Church need in order to evangelize "secularized" Europe? First of all a thorough and healthy philosophical reflection. The present problems, even though they may seem theological at first sight, are almost always philosophical problems too.

Evangelization must take into account the cultural values in which people live. This is the whole problem of inculturation. A great effort must be made to renew the links between faith and culture. Their common source is in the same God, creator and savior. "The break between the Gospel and culture is undoubtedly the drama of our age" (Evangelii nuntiandi, n.20).

It is urgent in our age to recover and tell again to the world "the reasons for believing". Popular religiosity is being rediscovered almost everywhere: "If this is well-oriented, especially by a pedagogy of evangelization, it is rich in values" (Evangelii nuntiandi, n.48).

Healing the Great Values of Western Humanism: We spoke about the great values which are part of the European patrimony and heritage (the uniqueness of the person, his/her dignity and freedom, the equality of all, sense of democracy, respect for the fundamental rights of persons, social justice, solidarity, science). Rooted without doubt in the heart of humanity, these values

have come to us Europeans through the matrix of the Christian faith, purified and enriched by it. These are nothing else than Christian values which have been "laicized, naturalized, secularized". They subsist today without their point of reference and anchorage in the transcendent. Only the reattachment of these values to their source and their defender can heal Europe of the slow poisoning of the "toxins" secreted by its own body of values. There is a liberation which only the Christian faith and the Church are capable of bringing to a successful conclusion.

The Parish and Small Groups. Evangelization is a complex task. But the Church is convinced that it depends first and foremost on the living witness of Christians at the heart of the human community.

Only rarely, however, does a Christian give witnesses alone: the Christian witness in community. It is here that one of the biggest problems of evangelization today is being posed. The parishes in fact, the classic places of Christian life and witness, clearly seem to be losing their vitality. It appears that a great part of the strength of witness and of evangelizing vitality is passing to other hands... to numerous small groups in the Church.

How can we find the linkages between these groups and the classic structures of the Church, i.e. the parishes and the Catholic movements? Our defect is probably a kind of neo-pelagianism and a lack of faith in the omnipotence of the Word of God. There is only one remedy: the rediscovery of the reality of grace and the omnipotence of the Word of God.

(Excerpts from the text published in Documentation Catholique, No. 1906, pp. 1068-1078; translated and somewhat abridged).

Ref. Chronica CICM: Via San Giovanni Eudes 95, 00163 Roma.

We draw to your attention a recent book written in Italian on the Extraordinary Synod:

RAPPORTO SULLA CHIESA: Il Ventodel Sud. Fabrizio Mastrofini, E.M.I., Bologna, 1986, pp.184. Lire 14.000.

There were many tensions surround the Extraordinary Synod (Ref. SEDOS Bulletin of January 15, 1986). However, the Synod didn't allow itself to be maneuvered into a position of deciding whether or not to implement the orientations of Vatican Council II. Instead, it strongly reaffirmed them. Representatives from the young Church of the so-called Third World were largely responsible for this strong and firm affirmation. The interesting sub-title "The Wind from the South" sums up the perspective of the author.

The book reports the Synod under four different headings: The West; Latin America; Africa; Asia and Oceania and concludes that the Synod was an authentic orientation for the Church in the third millennium. The book also contains 30 of the more interesting interventions made during the course of the Synod.

E.M.I. are to be congratulated for publishing this **informative** book so quickly after the Synod.

Incidentally, a March 1986 publication of Editions du Cerf, contains 16 of the more significant reports from the individual churches submitted to the secretariat of the Preparatory Commission in preparation for the Extraordinary Synod.

Another book published this year that concerns itself with the Church in the third millennium is:

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE: A model for the year 2001. Walbert Bühlman O.F.M. Cap. St. Paul Publications, Slough, England, 1986 pp. 207, £6.95.

This thought provoking book focuses on the shift in the Catholic Church from a Western to a World Church. The Church has become the church "of six continents", a church in which the peoples of the Third World predominate. From his long experience of mission, Walbert Bühlmann focuses on the development of the church in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and indicates how the church as a whole can benefit from the new values and forms of Christian living emerging from these churches. The book contains a section exploring new structures for the church and an epilogue by Karl Rahner.

We would like to call your attention to the following Pro Mundi Vita publications:

SECTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA: A PASTORAL PROBLEM  
Bulletin 100, 1985/1.

REFLECTIONS ON THE POSITION OF AFRICAN WOMEN  
African Dossier No.33, 2/1985.

THE LOCAL CHURCH AND MILITANT LAY PARTICIPATION:  
THE MSPC EXPERIENCE. Asian-Australian Dossier No.34.

VATICAN II: TWENTY YEARS ON. THE EXTRAORDINARY SYNOD  
Bulletin 102, 1985/3.

JOHN PAUL II AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH TODAY  
Bulletin 103, 1985/4.

COMING EVENTS:

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*  
\* THIRD WORLD THEOLOGIES IN RELATION TO THE MISSION \*  
\* OF THE CHURCH \*  
\* \*  
\* \*  
\* PLACE: Villa Cavalletti. \*  
\* \*  
\* DATE: Tuesday, May 6, 18.00 hrs. \*  
\* to \*  
\* Saturday, May 10, 14.00 hrs. \*  
\* \*  
\* SPEAKERS: Jean Marc Ela - Cameroun, \*  
\* Jose Marins - Brazil \*  
\* Michael Amaladoss, SJ - India \*  
\* \*  
\* FACILITATOR: SR. KIT COLLINS, RSCJ \*  
\* \*  
\* REGISTRATION: FORMS INCLUDE IN THE MARCH BULLETIN. \*  
\* Phone SEDOS Secretariat if additional \*  
\* forms are required. \*  
\* \*  
\* \*\*\*\*\*

Notices

---

DIPLOMA IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

---

The aim of this one year programme is to create for the participants a learning situation in which the development process can be analysed, critiqued and reflected upon in a broad inter-disciplinary context. A deliberate attempt is made in all subject areas to integrate the relevant theory with the experiential and cultural backgrounds of the students. The course will be particularly helpful to those working in less developed areas, engaged in justice and peace animation, or developing community projects.

All enquiries to: Fr. Richard Quinn, C.S.Sp., Development Studies Centre, Kimmage Manor, Whitehall Road, Dublin 12, Ireland. Tel. 554381, 508454.

DATE : September 29, 1986 to May 30, 1987.

TUTION: £1,025

---

JUSTICE AND FAITH WORKSHOP

---

The Workshop which is sponsored by the Irish Missionary Union will provide opportunity for missionaries, laity, clergy and religious to reflect on their commitment to an evangelical option for the poor whether in the Third or First World.

While outside resource people will be available, the workshop process will draw heavily on the sharing of experience, expertise and insight by the community of participants.

Apply to: Justice and Peace Workshop, St. Columban's, Navan, Co. Meath, Ireland. Tel. Navan (046) 21525.

DATE : February 22 - 5 June, 1987

APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 1, 1986.

---

INTERNATIONAL LUMKO COURSE

---

Pastoral leaders from various countries have requested a condensed and short introductory course into the LUMKO series "Training for Community Ministries", used widely in animating and training local leaders of Christian communities. Those who attend should be pastoral leaders of dioceses, institutes, training centres etc. who wish to train others in suitable pastoral methods of encouraging Small Christian Communities, awareness programmes for the Christian community and training local leaders in their respective countries. The course is conducted by F. Lobinger and O. Hermer, main authors of the LUMKO series.

Apply to: Lumko Missiological Institute, P.O. Box 5058  
1403 Delmenville, South Africa. Tel. (011) 827-8994

DATE : 2 - 29 November, 1986.

FEE : US\$380 (including board, tuition, study tours to local parishes).