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IN THIS ISSUE: Futurology is, at best, a hazardous occupation. It is also a necessary one, not least for those engaged in mission. Reading the signs of the times and planning for the future is very much the theme of this issue.

Thomas Sine looking at the 60's and 70's asked the participants at his Anticipatory Planning Workshop what were some of the unexpected, happenings of those two decades? He suggested: space, Vatican II, the womens' movement, the failure of 'development', student protest, China, OPEC, Vietnam, sexual revolution, civil rights, the drug scene, ecology - environment, the counter-culture, challenge of the poor, challenge to the establishment. We might add: sects, the "fall-out" on relations with missionaries as the countries of the so called "third world" tasted the mixed fruits of independence; fundamentalist Islam, the end of apartheid. The list can be continued. How many of these should have been foreseen? How would preparation for mission have been affected?

There may be a tendency to remain unconcerned about reading the signs of the times and to take refuge in the knowledge that 'it is the Lord who builds the house'. Yet it is the Lord who challenged the Pharisees: "You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky - how is it you cannot interpret this fateful hour"?

Francisco Claver SJ, former bishop of Malaybalay in the Philippines reflects on the Church in Asia twenty years after Vatican II and singles out participation as the key pastoral concept coming from the Council. A participatory model of Church means the growth of the local

Church and a shift of focus from hierarchical leadership to lay involvement, from the institution to its membership, from canonical concerns to life problems. As he reflects on the approaching end of British sovereignty in Hong Kong he applies this concept of participation to the need for basic ecclesial communities in a servant model of Church there.

John Fuellenbach looks at the recent "Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation" and attempts to analyse how it will fit into the future development of liberation theology.

There are short items on a visit from Rome to the Commission on World Mission and Evangelisation (CWME) of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, and on an important consultation on Mission being organised for the first time on an ecumenical basis in the USA - a sign of hope for the future. Next issue will contain a report of the SEDOS Seminar: Third World Theologies and their Contribution to the Universal Mission of the Church, held last week at Villa Cavalletti.

#### NEWS

NEW SEDOS MEMBER: We welcome to membership of SEDOS the Congregation of OUR LADY OF SION. The Superior General is Kay Macdonald, at present President of the Union of Women's Superiors General in Rome (UISG). The aim of the Congregation is ecclesial dialogue with the Jewish Community. They are about 1150 in number, in 25 countries, in all continents except Asia. Address: Via Garibaldi 28, 00153 Roma. (Tel. 581.04.65).

Congratulations to Alonso Gustavo on his re-election as Superior General of the Claretians at their recent 20th General Chapter. There are approximately 2800 Claretians of whom 540 are in Africa, 1120 in Latin America and 210 in Asia and Oceania. There are 11 groups of Lay Claretians in Spain with a total of 250 members.

SOLIDARITY NETWORK: The working group which was established at the SEDOS/Justice and Peace Commission meeting in March (See SEDOS Bulletin 86/4, April 15) met at SEDOS Secretariat on April 23, 1986 and drafted proposals for the Network. These were presented to the Villa Cavalletti SEDOS Seminar participants and following discussion were recommended unanimously to the Executives of both SEDOS and the Justice and Peace Commission of UISG/USG.

LIBERATION THEOLOGY: Fr. John Fuellenbach, SVD addressed a very well attended SEDOS meeting, third in the series, at the Collegio dei Verbiti on April 29th 1986. The topic was a first-reflection on the document "INSTRUCTION ON CHRISTIAN FREEDOM AND LIBERATION" of March 1986. The text of his address is in this issue.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MISSION STUDIES: The Executive Board of IAMS came to Rome last month to make preparations for their triennial meeting which will be held here in June 1988. While here they met with representatives of local academic institutes and local Churches on 22nd April in the Library of the Urbaniana University. The meeting was convened and hosted by the Executive Secretary of SEDOS and Prof. Willi Henkel of the Urbaniana University, both local members of IAMS.

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THE CHURCH IN ASIA: TWENTY YEARS  
AFTER VATICAN II

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Francisco P. Claver, S.J.

*Dans ces réflexions personnelles sur l'Eglise en Asie, aujourd'hui, Mgr. Claver relève la Participation comme l'idée-clef pastorale parmi toutes les autres idées très riches qui viennent de Vatican II. Une église basée sur la participation est un mode nouveau d'être Eglise en Asie. Ceci implique un changement de perspective d'une direction hiérarchique vers une conception participative des laïcs; de l'institution vers la communauté; des soucis légalistes vers les problèmes de vie des laïcs. Les Communautés chrétiennes de base - selon le modèle asiatique - joueront un rôle important dans ce déplacement d'accent.*

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Twenty years in the life of an institution is only a drop in the bucket - especially if the institutional bucket partakes somewhat of the attribute of eternity. Thus, to try assessing what has happened to the Catholic church since the close of Vatican II in 1965 would possibly be like attempting to trace a particular drop in a pailful of water to see what effect it has had on the other millions of drops in the bucket. An impossibility. But possibly the image to use should be something else. A chemical reaction perhaps, leaven in the dough, an electrical charge to a dead battery - something more dynamic, something more life-giving.

The little drop of water that Vatican II may seem to be will not be an innocent after all, even when looked at "with the eyes of eternity". For the incontrovertible fact is the Council has wrought change, great change, in the eternal church of Christ, brief as the time has been since its ending twenty years ago.

ASSESSING THE CHANGE

"Grappling with ideas" - this seems to be as good a summary as any of what has transpired those past twenty years. For Vatican II was essentially an idea - or ideas. Aggiornamento, opening to the modern world, reform, etc. - however one wants to describe what Pope John XXIII set out to do - the original idea has, in the course of the Council and its aftermath, generated one rich idea after another, not always in an orderly way nor in clear logical sequence, but still conjoined in tight linkage one to another. The approach I propose to follow is rather simple and it is centered on these two questions:

- 1) What single Vatican II idea has led to the most radical change in the Church's pastoral work? And
- 2) How does the Church of Asia measure up to that one idea?

I do not doubt many reasons - and good ones - can be adduced against the choice of those two questions and the manner of proceeding that they imply. But I propose them here, at least initially, as merely

heuristic questions, as a springboard which, I hope, will launch further questions and new answers.

### THE KEY PASTORAL IDEA

If I were to choose among the many rich ideas of Vatican II, from a pastoral point of view, I would not hesitate to put my finger on participation. And hence I would define the most creative and effective pastoral initiatives arising from Vatican II in terms of the building up of a more participatory church. One major idea among many? Or the key idea on which all the others depend? It probably does not matter how one answers these questions as long as these ideas do not remain on the conceptual level but are made to bear in practical ways on the life of the Church.

If the idea of participation is taken as a summation of all of Vatican II, it is from a pastoral bias which looks always to what actually happens to people because of ideas or events or the action of other people. Hence the question: What happens when the Institutional Church begins to participate more fully in the life of the people and - the other side of the same coin - when the people likewise begin to participate just as fully in the life of the Church? Many things happen - and quite inevitably. Some very obvious effects are the following:

1. A change of focus. When the ethic of participation takes hold of a Church community, there is a shift of focus from hierarchical leadership to lay followership, from the institution to its membership, from canonical concerns to the life problems of the people. It is not that hierarchy, institution and ecclesiastical law are no longer of consequence. They still are, but like the Sabbath, they are put in the perspective they are meant to be in: at the service of people - not the other way around. It is this "paradigm shift", more than any other, it seems, that has brought about the biggest change in the Church these past twenty years. It is also the most recalcitrant of change where the old order is most entrenched and the change is interpreted in terms of power and not of service.

2. Social Transformation. The shift just noted above leads to another: the acceptance of the transforming power of the Gospel not just for individuals but for communities and societies as a whole. Conversion, in other words, is seen to have personal as well as social dimensions. Again the logic flows from the archetypal idea of participation: when the rank-and-file membership of the church is brought fully into the evangelizing task of the Church, to participate actively in the task, they see at once that the Gospel is not meant only for that sphere of life that is called spiritual; it is for the whole of life; for the spiritual and the moral, yes, but also for the political, the economic, the cultural, the social, etc. And the Gospel must be made to bear on these other spheres, to transform them, change them, sublimate them, so that in truth the whole of life becomes truly Christian. The task is seen both as a personal mission and as a communal one: Not just the individual Christian but the whole community of believers must work towards the transforming of themselves and the world around them unto the Kingdom of Christ.

3. Discernment. The task of the Church thus understood, is not going to be done without plenty of thinking and consulting preceding it and accompanying it at every step. Everyone

in the community has something to contribute to the task. But what that contribution is, how it is to be made, these cannot be answered except in a continuous analytical and reflecting process engaged in by both the individual and the whole community, and beyond analysis and reflection, prayerful discernment from faith.

4. Inculturation. A quite significant development in most Third World Churches, one that has stemmed and evolved from Council ideas about reform and renewal, is a strong preoccupation with inculturation - the effort to express and live the faith in terms and ways more attuned to the symbols and traditions of a people. In places where the movement towards the development of a more participative Church is strong, the inculturative process is also far advanced. The strong correlation of the two is not hard to see: When people are allowed to participate more fully in the life of the Church as active members, they will do so as themselves, i.e. as bearers of a particular culture.

5. A new way of being Church. The idea of a local Church - the Church not only in but of a place and people - is a new one, for our generation at least. The Church becomes local, practically inevitably, again for the sole reason that when people begin participating in its life, they bring into its ambit of concern their own life concerns. This has the effect of both broadening and narrowing the Church's concerns: broadening them, that is, beyond its explicitly spiritual concerns; narrowing them to the specificities of the people's life as they see it and as they try to live it in a Christian way as this people and not generalized Christians.

In 1981, at the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) General Assembly, this new way of being Church was talked about in terms of the Church as Communion. Whatever theologians say about this particular model of the Church, viewed from a pastoral point of view and brought down to specific pastoral programs, it will come down to what we call here a participatory Church: its distinctive note is sharing - and sharing is but another name of charity, the essential message of Christ's Gospel.

#### A STRATEGY OF CHANGE

The choice of participation as the key idea of Vatican II is dictated not by good pastoral practice alone but by equally good social sciences as well - at least that branch of it that deals with change in society. Social change is a complex phenomenon but to simplify it a bit, there are two general aspects of society that 'change-agents' ordinarily pay careful attention to in their efforts to bring about holistic change: cultural values and social structures.

Looking at the creation of a more participatory Church as a phenomenon of social change within the Church, we cannot but note its validity precisely as a process of change. When participation and its germane values (social transformation, co-responsibility, dialogue, communal discernment, human dignity, the moral power of acting believers, etc.) are effectively interiorized, they will result in a radical restructuring of the social fabric of the Church. Similarly, when structures of participation (base communities, parish councils, pastoral councils, synods, etc.) become operative as ordinary parts of the institutional Church, they will reinforce the new values that are

connoted by the term "participatory Church."

In fine, the plethora of ideas offered by Vatican II - revolutionary and dynamic ideas all, whether taken singly or collectively - will be largely ineffective except in the full acceptance of the basic idea of participation. This conclusion seems to be too sweeping and hence as invalid as any other broad generalization. But it is based on the general principle - and it falls or stands on the validity of this principle - namely, that socio-cultural change (change involving whole peoples) will not catch unless it is understood, decided on, acted on, in a word, participated in, by as wide a spectrum as possible of the society undergoing change. It is for this reason that the notion - and practice - of an ever more and more participatory Church is felt to be the most revolutionary idea coming from Vatican II and hence the yardstick to use in assessing developments - anywhere - in the post-conciliar Church.

I would like to use this yardstick in this little effort to make sense out of the Asian Church today.

#### THE CHURCH OF ASIA

The Church of Asia, insofar as it is possible to conceive of it as an entity, is not just a bucket of water but a whole ocean. To say something about it, then, beyond the most jejune generalities, would not be worth attempting, except for this one specific fact that the one dominant model of the Church throughout the continent prior to Vatican II was that of the Institutional Church. There is hence a common starting ground to assess it from. If participation is thus used as the standard of measurement, it is possible to say something at least about the temperature of the water of the vast ocean that is the Church of Asia. From this standpoint, three areas of assessment impressionistic for the most part, true, but still not devoid entirely of validity - present themselves for consideration: The extent of acceptance of the participatory model; lay leadership; and obstacles to change.

1. The extent of participation. The best criterion for judging to what extent the ethic of participation has caught in any Church is to see whether and how far the concept of the BCC - the Basic Christian Community - has been accepted in pastoral practice. If the BCC is used here as the measure of change, it is because participation at all levels and in all areas of community life is of the essence of the BCC. This contrasts sharply with the traditional parish which is by definition hierarchical in structure and function and rather minimalist as far as lay participation is concerned. The two - the BCC and the Traditional parish - represent hence two kinds of Churches and provide us with ideal types for comparative purposes.

The traditional parish and all it stands for is still the model form of Church throughout Asia. If ideas and practices of Vatican II have been incorporated into it, their overall effect has had little impact on old outlooks and structures of the Church. All too often, for instance, lay ministers, if they are accepted, tend to be clericalized lay men; pastoral councils, where they exist, are rigidly run as

consultative - not as fully deliberative - bodies; lay associations are of the "mandated organization" type, concerned mostly with "churchy" interests; and "spiritual" movements like the cursillo and the Charismatic Renewal are geared mainly towards personal sanctification.

The BCC kind of Church is, however, slowly gaining ground. There is genuine interest shown in it in many countries of the continent and in some its development is quite well advanced. True enough, the BCC admits of many definitions depending on the kind and extent of participation it accords the laity. In its most basic form, it is mainly a liturgical community in which active lay participation in worship is the rule, and this participation is seen not as only a concession to the laity but as their full right-though its interest will tend to be personal conversion.

In other forms of the BCC, the social implications of the Gospel are given as much attention as personal spiritual growth and sanctification, and the community's worship and pastoral programs reflect this wider vision of the church and its mission. It is in these types of BCCs too that genuine discernment and inculturation are taking place with more than a modicum of success. From a merely quantitative angle, the development of BCC in Asia has barely gotten off the ground, but to judge from what seem like a groundswell of interest in it in practically every country of Asia, the prognosis is most hopeful.

2. Lay leadership: The newest instrument of the FABC to be created is the FABC Committee for the Laity. So far it has centered on lay leadership formation and has already held the first of three planned regional institutes on lay leadership. What is of significance to us here is not so much the institutes themselves and their effectivity as the simple fact of the committee's creation and its focus on leadership. For, as has already been noted above, it does bespeak a movement that is gaining strength and its whole direction is towards empowering the laity and getting them to participate more actively in the Church's task of evangelization.

3. Obstacles to Change. I am not too sure that the obstacles to the creation of more participative Churches are any different in Asia than in the rest of the world - except perhaps for some facts of a cultural nature that may be distinctive of Asian peoples. The one biggest single hindrance has already been alluded to: the deeply entrenched concept of the Church as institution. It is for all practical purposes the only model of Church that we know and for all its virtues it is not the model that one should foster if one is interested in developing a Church that will encourage lay participation to the fullest extent and allow for its widest exercise within its own internal structuring. If, as was noted early on, holistic change entails attending to both the values and the social structuring of a society to ensure their mutual reinforcement in the process of change, integral change without too much conflict will be very difficult where the values and the structures of the older order are firmly in possession and there is strong resistance to any threat or danger to their continuance.

The difficulty is compounded when, as in Asia, traditional respect for elders is transferred to ecclesiastical leaders and the ethic of participation is interpreted as an erosion of their authority and power.



### CONCLUSION

There is a lot more to be said, certainly, about the Church of Asia and the changes that have - or have not - taken place in the wake of Vatican II. We have not gone into such factors as

- the great diversity and strength of cultures in Asia, of the Great Traditions especially and their-to date-impermeability by christianity;
- the minority status of the Church in most Asian countries and what the fact means for the more visible presence of the Church the Vatican II seems to ask for;
- the many initiatives taken by the FABC through its various instrumentalities and their impact on the Church in general;
- the contribution of such Asia-wide institutions as the East Asian Pastoral Institute.

But crucial as these and many more factors may be, their importance can only be guessed at here. Their proper evaluation and the action taken on them from their evaluation have to be done on the level of each local Church. It is to that level the responsibility belongs.

This last statement is not as simple as it seems. For by making participation the standard by which to judge what has happened in the Churches of Asia as a result of Vatican II, we have in a very real sense been asking how capable are they for self-appraisal and self-regulation for the changes that Vatican II represents, what mechanisms have they created for common discernment and action, what real efforts have they expended and are still expending towards these ends? Even without fully researched answers to these questions, one cannot help concluding that there is a vitality to the Churches of Asia that is quite readily apparent; and the vitality is there because the participatory ethic of Vatican II is beginning to take on.

Ref: East Asian Pastoral Review, Vol.XXII, 1985. No.4  
P.O.Box 1815, Manila, Philippines

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TOWARDS A SERVANT CHURCH  
- BUILDING UP THE LOCAL CHURCH

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Francisco F. Claver

*(We are adding two brief extracts from another contribution of Bishop Claver as a comment on his above article. British sovereignty in Hong Kong ends in 1997. Building up the local Church is of paramount importance in the intervening years. The Bishop draws some lessons from the recent situation in the Philippine Church).*

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*(Voici deux autres extraits d'une contribution de Mgr. CLAVIER qui peuvent servir de commentaire à l'article ci-dessus. A Hong Kong, la souveraineté britannique prend fin en 1997. En vue de cet événement, l'établissement de l'Eglise locale est de toute première importance dans les années à venir. L'évêque cherche à tirer quelques leçons à partir de la situation dans laquelle s'est trouvée dernièrement l'Eglise des Philippines.*

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BASIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

In its barest essence the Basic Christian Community is the Church that makes provision for its members to participate as fully as possible in its total life-in its thinking and reflecting as a community of faith, in its work of evangelization, in its action as a community in the wider society in which it is embedded, and in its organizing of itself to do all the above. It is only in a Church of this kind, participatory in every aspect of its life, that the communal preaching of the Gospel - the fulfilling and teaching of the Gospel by a whole Church community - can be effectively and forcefully done. And such a Church will necessarily have to be a Local Church.

The term Local Church means a Church that is not only in a place, located geographically within a given nation or people but more importantly of it, a part of the nation, sharing its language and culture, its life, its fears and problems, its hopes and dreams, its character as a distinct group of people. If the essence of the BCC type of Church is precisely its participative character, and if its members truly participate in its life-and life in both its ad intra and ad extra dimensions-they will do so as themselves. Which means, they will take part in the life of the Church as bearers of their particular culture; they will bring into it their cultural tradition, the way that tradition has shaped their mode of thinking and behaving their language, their art, their special way of being human.

The end result will be a truly local Church. It will be a Church whose members are genuinely inserted into a given people, sharing a common history and a common way of life, yet one with the universal Church in their acceptance of the faith of the Gospel, attempting to live that same faith in the place of their insertion as citizens and as Christians.

Participation: The question the bishops of the Philippines posed to themselves about what the Church should do in the event of a Communist take-over of the country was in essence a question about the mission and the nature of the Church. Here I would like to focus attention on the response of those bishops who stated that, Communism or no Communism, they would approach the Church's evangelizing task in the same way.

There are many reasons why those particular bishops could say what they said. But the main one, to my mind, is that they are heads of dioceses where the BCC concept of Church is widely operative. The whole thrust, then, of their pastoral programs is towards making their people, at all levels, participate as fully as possible in the faith life of the Church, in its reflecting, praying, acting as a community of believers. Hence, they could come up with the confident statement they made: If the people can act now with faith, in faith, and in a communal way as Church therefore in regard to besetting political and economic problems, they will be able to do likewise under a Communist regime. To these bishops, their pastoral and fundamental - task was crystal clear: it was to build up, strengthen, and confirm the faith of their people, to be forever fostering the faith-life of their flocks in order for them to be able to respond in faith to whatever happens to them as a people.

I am not too sure that the definition of the Church's pastoral task in the terms just expressed is specific to the Philippines alone because of its peculiar history. The definition, it seems to me springs from another definition - the definition of the Church as Servant and indeed as participative, in the way we have spoken of service and participation above.

A Servant Church: If in the Philippines we can speak of the possibility of a change in political and economic systems, the Church of Hong Kong, looking ahead to 1997, can speak of the inevitability of change. If I may venture an outsider's opinion, I will have to say that the old model of the Church as Institution, with its heavy reliance on hierarchical and clerical leadership, just will not do in the face of a future probability that the exercise of such leadership will not be as free as it is now, perhaps it may even be prescribed. (Unless, of course, it elects, in a strange twist of thinking vis-a-vis the Church's character as local, to become an appendage of the state.) another thrust will have to develop within the next ten years - one that will put the responsibility of faith-action on the people at large and not just on the Church's leadership. It is in this light that the present conscious efforts to develop a Servant Church in Hong Kong - which I trust will also be fully participative and local - give much hope for the future of the Church there.

Ref. TRIPOD 1985, No.30., 6, Welfare Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong.

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## AN ECUMENICAL EXCHANGE

Report of the visit to the Commission on  
World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches,  
Geneve, 9-11 April, 1986

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Joan Delaney, MM

The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches recently decided to revive a former practice of exchanging visits. In April 1985, four of the CWME staff came to Rome for a four-day visit which included meetings at various Vatican Departments, UISG, USG and SEDOS. This year CWME hosted six visitors from Rome:

Mgr. Anthony Adanuty  
William Jenkinson, CSSp.  
Louise Côté, CND  
Clementia Burkard, SAC  
Jean-Pierre Chevrolet, PA  
Anthony Smit, SDB

Mgr. Basil Meeking of the Secretariat for Christian Unity accompanied the group on the visit.

The programme was arranged to provide the visitors with not only an understanding of the work of CWME, but also with an opportunity to learn from the work of other sections of the WCC related to mission. Dr. Emilio Castro, General Secretary of the WCC and Prof. Todor Sabev, Deputy General Secretary welcoming the group expressed the need for continued and ever greater collaboration in the cause of unity. Such collaboration is more easily achieved by personal contacts.

The staff of the CWME spent an afternoon presenting the work of the various sections: the Urban Rural Mission (Dawn Ross), the desk on Evangelism (Raymond Fung), Orthodox Studies (Ion Bria), Relationships in Mission (Nicole Fisher). Dr. Stockwell, the Director of CWME, gave the history of the Commission and the plans for the 1988 World Mission Conference. He also gave a review of the publications including the International Review of Mission which will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 1987. Monsignor Meeking described the Roman Catholic collaboration with CWME beginning with the presence of observers at the CWME conference in Mexico City in 1963. At present there are four consultants nominated by USG and UISG representing religious orders, and three personal consultants, - Sister Mary Motte, FMM., Rev. Michael Amaldoss, SJ., and Rev. Karl Müller, SVD., appointed by the Secretariat for Christian Unity. In addition, Sr. Joan Delaney, MM, is on the CWME staff as the Roman Catholic consultant on mission.

Major presentations concerned the social justice dimension of the World Council of churches as mission (Ruth Sovik, Deputy General Secretary), the importance of Ecumenical Learning in the formation of those doing mission (John Pobee) and the work of Faith and Order in relation to mission (Thomas Best). The presentations were followed by a valuable interchange among guests, CWME staff and those making the presentation.

Dr. Adrian van Geense welcomed the group to the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, a village 18 kilometres outside Geneva. He related some of the highlights in the forty-year history of the Institute which began in the reconciling post-war period. The present Roman Catholic involvement in the Institute includes the yearly appointment of a Roman Catholic professor for the four-month Graduate School and the subsequent seminar programme. A visit to Rome is also arranged each year for the participants of the Graduate School.

Dr. and Mrs. Stockwell and their daughter, Martha, provided a very personal touch to the visit by an invitation to supper at their home. Appreciation of this part of the visit was gratefully acknowledged by all in the evaluation at the end of the visit.

Concerning the regular exchange of such visits, it was felt that future visits could now progress to the consideration of some study topic of mutual interest as a focal point. The Roman Catholic participants also discussed various ways in which the present collaboration could be made known and future collaboration extended through the groups they represent.

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#### IL VENTO DEL SUD

Alessandro Zanotelli

*Il 14 marzo due suore comboniane venivano rapite dai guerriglieri antigovernativi della RENAMO in un Mozambico ormai consumedo dalla guerra. Sono sparite nel nulla. Mesi di ansietà questi anche per i centinaia di missionari prigionieri dell'esercito in fuga di Basilio Okello (nel 1979 ben quattro comboniani avevano perso la vita in analoghe circostanze). In Angola molte comunità vivono nella più totale incertezza, vittime, insieme a tutto un popolo, di un'altra spaventosa guerra. (Oltre 40 i missionari rapiti, 15 quelli uccisi, ultimo dei quali il cappuccino p. Giuseppe Moretto caduto in un'imboscata il 27 maggio scorso). Identica precarietà in Ciad dove i missionari convivono con una ventennale guerra civile. Analoghe preoccupazioni per i missionari nel sud Sudan dove ormai dilagano i guerriglieri di John Garang.*

*Sono questi alcuni esempi di cosa comporti oggi essere missionari in un'Africa sconvolta da guerre e conflitti. La disponibilità a 'giocarsi la pelle' per rimanere a fianco di popoli che vivono il loro calvario diventa sempre più una caratteristica della missione. È significativo che ovunque, dopo seria riflessione, i missionari decidano di rimanere come suprema testimonianza di fedeltà, nel nome di Cristo, al loro popolo. 'Restiamo perché è arrivato il momento in cui possiamo dire con la vita che partecipiamo alla vita del popolo - così ha scritto al proprio vescovo una comunità missionaria del Mozambico - forse in una condivisione che non avremo mai scelto, ma che oggi la nostra vita missionaria e la nostra fedeltà a questo popolo esigono: condividerla la fame, l'insicurezza, il saccheggio, condividere ... perché Signore? ... la morte!'. (Si veda a questo proposito l'esperienza raccontata da uno di loro in questo numero).*

*Estratto: Nigrizia: Fatti e problemi del Mondo Nero.  
N.4. Aprile 1986*

- fine -

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THE CONTEXT OF MISSION  
ANTICIPATORY PLANNING WORKSHOP

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Ecumenical Workshop conducted by  
Dr. Thomas Sine, Maryknoll, N.Y.

*(Cet article pourrait être particulièrement utile aux Congrégations qui tiendront prochainement un Chapitre Général, et qui auront donc à examiner leur concept de la mission et leurs priorités. L'atelier de travail œcuménique préparatoire à la Planification qui a travaillé à Maryknoll propose une façon créative et pleine d'imagination d'aborder la planification. La planification concerne le futur en identifiant et en prévoyant les changements et les occasions en train de se présenter, en préparant deux ou plusieurs alternatives pour parer aux imprévus et en employant des forces sousutilisées à modestes frais.)*

*Cet article donne une vue d'ensemble des principales idées développées par l'atelier de travail. Le rapport complet de 35 pages est publié par: Maryknoll Research and Planning Department, Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545).*

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INTRODUCTION: PLANNING INTO THE FUTURE CONTEXT

The Future in Three Dimensions: We will study today the future in three dimensions.

Future as Anticipation: the first dimension of anticipatory planning, trying to forecast and anticipate what the emerging needs, challenges and opportunities of tomorrow's world will be.

Future as Advent: the sense of God's intentions for the human future - that this world is not abandoned, that God is in control though it seems at times that things are out of control.

Future as Creativity: beyond conventional and institutional constraints; discovering new and untapped resources that can meet the new challenges.

Purpose: We will examine the future as Anticipation, Advent and

Creativity as a way to break into a new way of thinking about the planning process. The whole reason for doing this, the bottom line, is so that we can be much more effective in what we understand our mission to be so that we can be there with response, mission, and compassion in advance of crises; and be more effective. I think some of our vehicles, quite frankly, some of our institutionalized, bureaucratized approaches, are not always effective. And I think we need a renaissance of Christian creativity and Christian imagination: finding a whole new way or ways that hopefully will be more responsive to the

challenges and more fully implement the vision of Advent that is part of our faith.

The United Methodists & Anticipatory Planning: They are the first major denomination that are really taking anticipatory planning seriously. They have contracted with the author of the Global 2000 Report to do the global forecast for them, to get a sense of how the whole landscape and context of mission is changing globally, - where the needs are going to be, and how to relate that to the planning process. They are the first major faith tradition that is incorporating anticipatory planning as an integral part of their planning process.

Anticipating the future, is an OPPORTUNITY TO BE PRO-ACTIVE INSTEAD OF RE-ACTIVE. If we can anticipate even a few of the emerging challenges, it gives us time to create new responses!

(Example) Everyone here is involved in international mission and one of the emerging trends is the exploding cities in the Third World. We are facing the urbanization of the Third World. If we do not take the trend seriously and mobilize today - and create new forms of urban entrepreneurship, new forms of community health care for cities today, new forms of helping people deal with self-help projects in housing, sanitation today, - fifteen years from now it's going to be too late. If we do anticipate, then we have time to recruit and prepare people as well as to mobilize financial resources. We have time to be there in advance of crises...

#### ANTICIPATORY PLANNING: SOME CHARACTERISTICS

- (a) Future responsive: Anticipatory Planning attempts to be futures responsive...and even with our best efforts to predict, we are still going to be surprised. Whatever we do, there are still going to be changes that we didn't anticipate or expect. BUT at least with Anticipatory Planning there is an effort to be futures responsive, to identify and anticipate the emerging changes and opportunities.
- (b) Creative/Divergent (Less bureaucratic) Anticipatory Planning seeks to break out of the conventional form and find ways that are potentially more effective and less bureaucratic. We simply do not have enough money to continue to do the kinds of ministry that we do with expensive buildings and paid staff. We need some new approaches.
- (c) Multiple Option: Anticipatory Planning has the advantage of helping you to start moving into contingency planning where you develop two or three different options. Because we will have given it some preliminary thought we can work from of a broad, multiple range of options.
- (d) Doing More with Less (Christian creativity by use of untapped resources) Anticipatory Planning shows that we are not going to have resources enough for the tremendous escalating needs of the 80's and 90's and beyond if we continue to do things the way we are doing them now. We need a renaissance of Christian imagination in relation to resource utilization. We are surrounded by vast

numbers of underutilized resources.

# I. FUTURE AS ANTICIPATION: TAKING THE FUTURE SERIOUSLY

Introduction: Looking at the 60's and 70's, what were some of the unexpected, unanticipated happenings of the last two decades?

Space, Vatican II, Women's movement, Failure of Development, Student protest movement, Challenge of Mission, Challenge to the Establishment, China, OPEC, Vietnam, Poor, Reawakening of the Church to sexuality, Civil rights, Drug scene, Ecology/Environmental movement, Counter-culture.

HOW EFFECTIVELY DID WE IN THE CHURCH RESPOND TO THE HAPPENINGS OF THE 60's AND 70's? How effectively did anybody respond? It wasn't just the Church...but the Church missed many opportunities to make a difference. And one of the main reasons-not the only reason-was that WE DID NOT EXPECT THINGS TO BE DIFFERENT! We expected the future to simply be an extension of what is, rather than look at the world that was going to be, and be ready to do mission in a rapidly changing world. As a consequence, often we got caught in a very re-active mode instead of a pro-active mode.

## ANTICIPATING A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

(Future Context is Changing)

### A. SECULAR ENVIRONMENT

#### 1. GLOBAL FUTURES:

- Urban apocalypse: Latin America will have 75% urbanization by the year 2000. Mexico City will be the largest city with 32 million; Sao Paulo will be second with 25 million. Calcutta and Bombay will have 19 million. If we do not take the future seriously and anticipate and mobilize resources for rural development and land reform, urban development, small businesses, cottage industries, vertical agriculture, urban agriculture - we are going to see a tremendous collapse of these urban environments.

- Economic growth and food production: Some 34 countries are running a minus-economic growth; all of them have less than 2% economic growth. In all of them food production growth is less than 2% a year. The population will soon outstrip food production.

- Future of population growth: We are going to be sharing this world with 6.2 billion people by the year 2000 (up from 4.6 billion today). This growth is most rapid in countries of the 2/3 world, - Kenya leading with 4.2%.

- Rambo-fever and U.S. policy: Rambo-fever is a mind-set not only in the U.S. but throughout the world with growing militarization all over this planet. This militarization often takes place not because Third World countries are in jeopardy but because of the prestige value of very expensive weapons systems.



- Declining potential for western response: The 30 year post-World War II boom is over and the whole rate of economic growth is really slowing; it is about 2% a year in Western Europe. Europe nations are cutting back on their own social programs. It's only a question of time before they will have to start cutting back their very generous response to needs throughout the 2/3 world. The American response is not increasing. It will be level for the next three years.

- Growing a planetary nervous system: We are growing a world-wide connected electronic information bank, connected with media and information systems. The new brokers of power will be those who control information. It will change the way in which we do development: micro-computers for agricultural cropping, health-care capabilities, etc. World Vision is going to be linked up internationally by computers with all of their bases throughout the world. They will be doing mission in an entirely different way.

- Stellar space: The momentum for exploring space is coming from the military and big business. To the extent that we focus our development in space, it will pull our limited resources away from earth. What will be the ethical issues of the High Frontier?

## 2. NATIONAL FUTURES:

This must be worked out in the country in collaboration with the local people.

## B. RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT

### 1. UNIVERSAL CHURCH

Coming of the Third Church: Walter Buhlmann's book (Orbis) shows a change within the international Church. By the year 2000 over half of all the Christians in the world will be in the southern hemisphere. They will be younger, darker skinned, politically more radical and more than a little upset with the way the rest of us have been using up the planet: 5% of the world's people using up 40% of the world's resources. This signals a major change in the character, nature and leadership of the Church. It means we cannot work paternalistically anymore, we have to work in true partnership. It means that the indigenous Church is going to be the Church of tomorrow. Most of the renewal is happening in the 2/3 world. It is only a question of time before missionaries start coming to the U.S. and Western Europe from the Third World, because that's where renewal is coming from. It will not be enough to read continental European and American theology, but increasingly we will have to read theology from Latin America, Asia and Africa to hear what God is saying to the Church.

Dialogue: As a positive response to CHINA's opening to the world, Christians will be fostering and participating in dialogue and exchanges in economic, scientific, educational, cultural, religious

and other fields. Dialogue with the GREAT RELIGIONS of Asia and the TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS of Africa, Oceania and Latin America is in process. How will our congregations be involved in dialogue?

Ecumenism in Mission : The mission of the Church is one, and this implies a UNITY among those carrying out the mission planning? How pervasive is the ecumenical dimension in our mission planning?

Emerging Role of Laity in Mission: Have the LAITY a way of proclaiming the Gospel that is specifically their own? How does the changing role of WOMEN in society and the Church affect how we view and plan for mission?

Inculturation: "Inculturation, which is the consequence of the INCARNATIONAL economy of salvation, is part and parcel of the mission of the Church....

Every aspect of the life and activity of the Church should be inculturated or indigenous: indigenous life-style, indigenous, arts, liturgy, spirituality, indigenous forms of religious life, indigenous organizations and institutions." (Archbishop Lourdusamy, "On Theological Formation", Vidyaajoti (October 1979), p.400).

Are the formation, educational and renewal programs of our Congregation flexible enough to deal with inculturation in even greater depth.

Proclamation: What CRITERIA will be using to evaluate an authentic proclamation of the Gospel in different regions of the world today, whether it be by word, action or silent presence? The need to proclaim the Gospel in SECULARIZED Europe and the USA has been recognized. How does one proclaim the Gospel to the rich, the powerful and the privileged classes in a culture?

Liberation of the Poor: If Christians are to be true to the liberative message of the Gospel, they must align themselves with the oppressed in the struggle to bring about justice. How consistent are we in our commitment to justice? How is it reflected in our policies & use of resources?

What are the elements of a new missionary spirituality that responds to this mission to the poor?

## 2. LOCAL CHURCH

This must be developed in collaboration with the local Church.

## 3. CONGREGATION FUTURES

Ministry, personnel and structures need to be examined by the Chapter and also at the provincial level.

## II. FUTURE AS ADVENT: GOD'S INTENT

We will now shift from looking at the future in anticipatory terms, that is, in terms of the future that we anticipate will occur

regardless of whether we want it or not. We will now look at the future in normative terms: This is the kind of future that we want to see take place, this is the future of dreams, this is the future of vision, this is the future that we as people of faith long to see come into being. Our point of reference is scripture, Church tradition, and your particular congregational Charism and vision.

The need for a Compelling Vision: Scripture says that without a vision the people perish. I really believe the Church today is perishing from a lack of compelling vision. In all of our dimension of life and mission I don't find very many groups that are compelled into the future with a strong sense of mission. Kenneth Boulding said no organization, society or group can long exist without some compelling imagery of the future that draws it forward. And while we have bits and pieces, there seems to be an absence of compelling imagery.

Beyond Social Gradualism: Importance of Biblical Vision: In the absence of clearly defined biblical vision, we tend to be tied up in what I call a kind of social gradualism, coming out of an evolutionary view of history and society progression, believing that if we just kind of nudge the system along with a few more laws that are a little more just and equitable and if we see the Church do a little better job, that things will gradually improve. And there's a whole vision of gradualism there that I think has more to do with enlightenment than it does with Scriptural material. And I think we need to move beyond a society gradualism into a biblically derived notion of vision.

A Remarkable Convergence: a Vision of Hope. One of the encouraging things that I see is a remarkable convergence out of the Catholic, Reformed, Anabaptist, Protestant and even Evangelical traditions of a rediscovery of the Kingdom of God. A Kingdom of righteousness in which there is no more sin. A Kingdom in which the oppression of the poor is ended. If we could help our people see that the future of God means that the handicapped are going to walk again, and that we can help people see that justice is going to come to the poor, and peace is going to come to the earth, and that vision and that imagery could sweep through our minds until it became at the center instead of the periphery of our lives, then there would be hope again.

Focusing Our Vision: I think that if we recover the vision of the Reign of God that is at the center of the Gospel, then the question to ask ourselves is what that vision would look like if it became enfleshed in the society in which we live.

- a) What are the specific characteristics of the Reign of God?
- b) After discussing the changing environments, what specific changes would take place in the society in which I live and work if the Reign of God was fully established? Certainly it would have to do with changing some patterns of relationship? Wouldn't it have something to do with the relationships changing so that people in the society start taking responsibility for one another? Our plan should address the anticipated needs of a changing environment and reflect a localized vision of the Reign of God.

### III. FUTURE AS CREATIVITY

#### A. Beyond the Bureaucracy: The Possibility of the Organic.

We have developed tremendous bureaucracies of paid professional helpers inside the Church as well as outside. We don't have the money to do the traditional institutional approaches. The Church of the Savior in Washington D.C. is an alternative approach that is much more organic and less bureaucratic. Nine years ago the Church of the Savior grew to a sum total of 112 members. They decided they were much too large and divided into six separate congregations. Each one of the congregations discerned and discussed their own unique mission focus, their mission vocation as a group, as a cluster. The ministry vocation one of the congregations or clusters is a health clinic. That small congregation services 35,000 people a year, most of them Central American refugees. Half of the people that work in that clinic are not salaried. They work at tent-making occupations to be involved and part of the commitment. They are not experiencing high levels of church growth. To be a member of that congregation requires not only being in worship every week and in the clinic but being in small home groups every week where you are known, cared for, nurtured and accountable. Because they have put mission at the center of their small congregational life, and mission at the center of their individual lives, they have moved into a direction that is increasingly more organic. In other words, ministry and mission flows out of their common life together in their small clusters where they pray for one another and support one another, much like the beginning of the orders.

#### B. Beyond Budget-Limited Mentality: The possibility of Underutilized Resources.

"If it's not in the budget, we can't do it." Mythical, absolutely preposterous! There are all kinds of underutilized and untapped resources all over our cities, congregations, Churches. We need to become creative Christian scroungers learning to do much more with much less. One of the possibilities: Working in a conference on the future of the cities a group put on a few years ago, I asked the participants to find something that's thrown away in the city and to do something for the kingdom of God. They came back a little while later and I asked what do you have?" They said, "vertical gardening." In Detroit, any city you go to, there are tires every place. We're going to get tires, stack them 9 tires high, fill them with dirt and potato seeds, water them from the top. The sprouts will come out the sides, and when it's harvest time, you push them over, pick up the potatoes, and sweep up the dirt". That's learning to use the throw away resources for the benefit of the kingdom of God!

If we are going to be effective in carrying out the work of God today and tomorrow, then we have got to look beyond the budget-limited approach and start to creatively identify land, buildings, people, mentors, not only in our churches, but in the congregations, particularly in the

Third World.

### C. Emergence of Radical Lay Discipleship & Whole-Life Stewardship

We need to move towards a much more radical approach to lay renewal and lay discipleship. What I find in our Churches is a kind of compartmentalized approach. You have a compartment over here for jobs, a compartment for family life, a compartment for recreation, racquet ball, vacations, leisure time, keeping the car up, and over here we have a compartment for Church. In compartments we Christians are not that different from the world around us. One of the reasons very few people are drawn to us or the Church is that we are more like the world than we would care to admit in terms of our fundamental transformation, commitment and values.

Full-life discipleship and stewardship, helping lay people see the possibilities of orchestrating their whole life around a new sense of vocation instead of just marginally showing up at Church once in a while is emerging as a major ministry focus of many congregations. Liturgy and new forms of celebration are an integral part of the transformation of life-direction and life-style

### D. Emergence of Ministries of Empowerment

Ministries of Empowerment that encourage and enable people to take responsibility for and charge of their own lives are emerging in the Churches today.

Just the other night I took my class at Seattle Civic College to visit with some people that have found way to move into empowerment. They are a little home Church group, small community again, which meets weekly, and sponsored some Laotian families. They brought, as one home group, 50 people into the United States and sponsored them. They helped them find housing, get clothing and food, but they had a difficult time helping them get jobs. Laotians don't work well in an urban economy. They are a tribal people. And they tried and tried unsuccessfully. Finally, one of the Laotian men said, "We want to farm, that's what we know, we want to farm. "That hadn't occurred to anyone. They leased 20 acres from the county. They got an agricultural specialist to work with them, and show them if you plant your seeds 2 1/2 inches deep you'll never see them again in Seattle. They worked with them, developing marketing strategy through grocery stores, restaurants, Pipe Street market. The women do the beautiful embroidery. These people are going to become economically self-reliant in a few years if the program keeps going forward because this Church cared. And what made it happen? Nine young people working almost full-time on this project, only two of whom have salaries. The rest lived in cooperative households, at \$250 per person per month, took tent-making jobs 20, 30, 40 hours a week to be involved in making this work. If they all had to have a salary and rent offices, there would not have been enough money to even get started on the project. But again, through a more

organic approach and moving people toward self-reliance, the project is working. We need our Churches to start small businesses. We need our Churches to start programs of economic empowerment, self-help housing. We need our Churches to be involved in job training, in terms of the example I mentioned before.

### Emergence of New Approaches to Structural Change

We need an Emergence of new approaches to structural change. We are not doing a very good job in terms of influencing public policy. Things are going in other directions. It needs to start with the new approach to awareness. Now one of the things that has come out of our discussions today is a growing need for new approaches to raising consciousness.

We need some travelling drama groups that do some things on Rambo-fever. People will come out to hear things dealt with satirically and through humour. We need to use the arts, we need to use music to raise consciousness to work for structural change and social justice.

### STEPS IN PLANNING INTO THE FUTURE

When going through the 3 stages of the Anticipatory Planning process it is important to consider certain aspects at each stage.

#### Stage I: Future as Anticipation

- A. Forecasting a Changing Environment: The following are diverse methods designed to help us forecast the future context of mission.
  - Multiple Options: In a 10 year context create 3 different stories about the future in the society/continent in which you are in mission: Disaster/Moderator/Optimistic or Minimalist/Moderate/Maximilists. All the stories are based on solid trends and information. Then ask: "How could we as a Congregation do ministry in each of these 3 different futures? What kinds of needs would we specifically target?" This would give us the advantage of flexibility and multiple options, and the opportunity to do preplanning. Then we ask: "Which of these futures is the most probable?"
  - Trends: After having studied and developed trend data, we next state, "We predict that by 1996....will happen".
  - Forecasting Consequences: Take an emerging event and examine the consequences of our own innovations in ministry. We are creating change, we are creating events every time we do ministry. There are going to be unwanted consequences - what are they. How are we prepared to deal with them?
  - Learning from the Past. Take a past event or situation similar to one that concerns the society or community and study the consequences both intended and unintended. Example: What were the consequences of a certain new road built through a wilderness area in northern Kenya?

- Asking the experts: Consensus/interactive questions among experts. As a leader in the field each one gives his/her forecast based on special knowledge. EXAMPLES: "What will be the health-care needs in the area in the next 10 years given the influx of people from the rural areas?"

The questionnaires come back and are collated so all can see the results. The second time each one can change opinions if he/she wishes. Then those who hold an extreme position "for" or "against" are asked: "What do you know that the rest of us don't know?" Weigh the answers. Then everyone votes a third time.

#### B. Implications for the Congregation

- 5 1. What are the implications of a changing global environment for the Congregation?
2. What are the implications of a changing national environment for the Congregation?
3. What are the consequences of the changing Church(s) environment for the Congregation?
4. What are the implications of the changing character of the Congregation?

#### Stage II. Future as Advent (Vision)

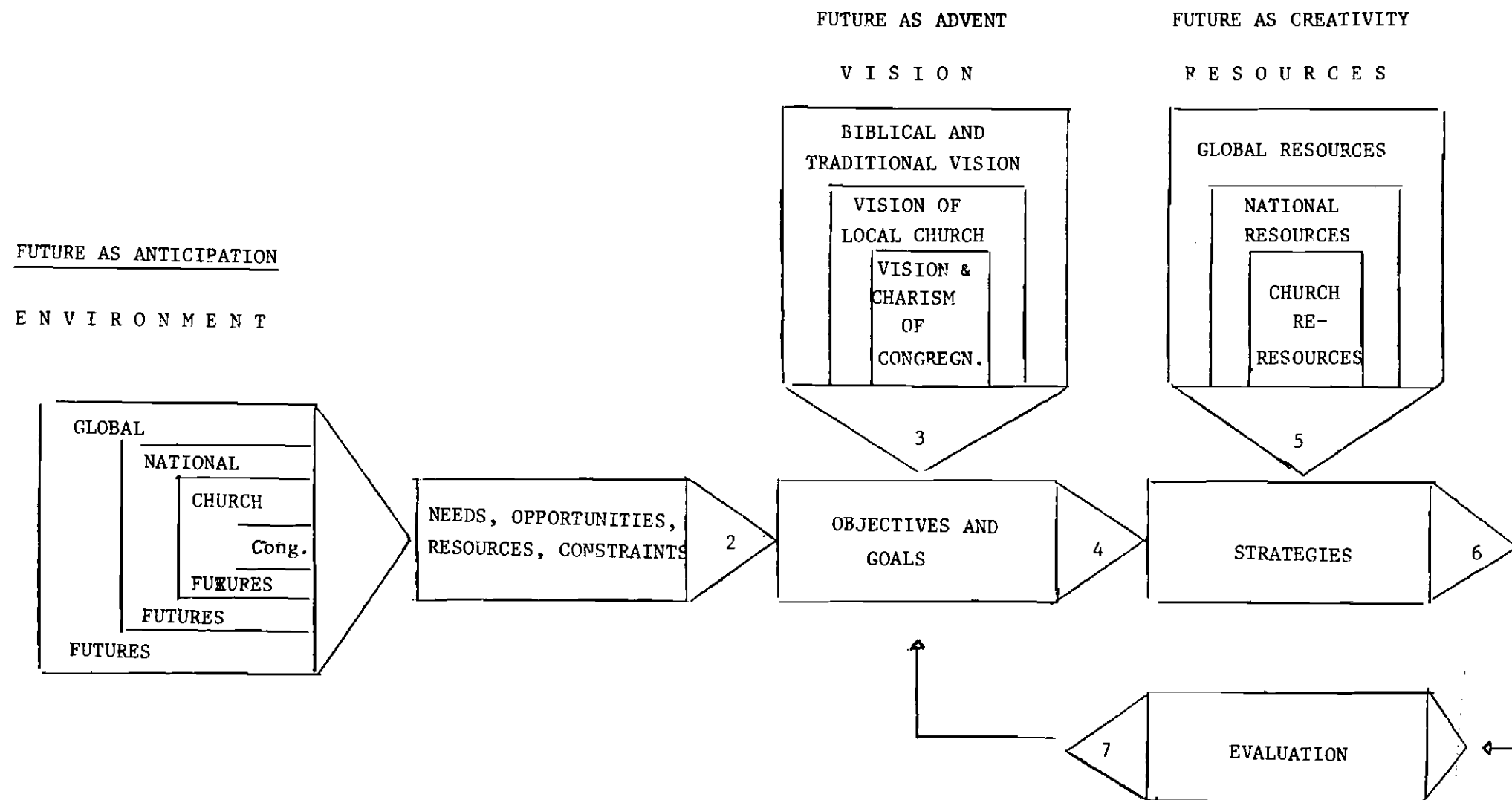
- a) What are the specific characteristics of the Reign of God?
- b) What specific changes would take place in a society/community if the Reign of God were fully established? List them.
- c) Write objectives that address significant anticipated needs and reflect a localized vision of the Reign of God.

#### Stage III. Future as Creativity

- a) List under-utilized resources
- b) List imaginative strategies that use ~~underutilized~~ resources to accomplish your stated objective. SEE CHART ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

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SCHEMA FOR ANTICIPATORY PLANNING

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SOME REMARKS ON THE DOCUMENT  
"INSTRUCTION ON CHRISTIAN FREEDOM AND LIBERATION" (MARCH 1986)

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John Fuellenbach, SVD

*(Dans cette conférence, donnée le 29 mai 1986 aux membres de SEDOS, le Père Fuellenbach présente une première analyse du document "positif" sur la théologie de la Libération, longtemps attendu et finalement publié par le Vatican. Il relève certains points positifs, mais fait aussi quelques observations critiques, pour conclure que le débat n'est pas clos.)*

My intention in this brief presentation is not to give you a complete analysis of the new document on liberation and freedom, but to present to you a few positive and a few critical observations which should serve as a starting point for further reflection and discussion.

After the first document on Liberation Theology, "ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE 'THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION' (1984), which was a rather negative approach to the topic, most people concerned with Liberation Theology were prepared for the worst, but were pleasantly surprised that the new document did not affirm their negative expectations. Therefore, the document did receive quite a positive reaction from the press. However, it is still too early to see how theologians will react to it.

POSITIVE OBSERVATIONS:

1. The reconciling character of the document is obvious. There are no outright condemnations, rather, it is a serious attempt to acknowledge the positive aspects of Liberation Theology without even mentioning the word by name. The document wants to set this theology into a broader frame of Christian freedom and liberation, assuming that Christian revelation as a whole had always something to do with the basic topic of Liberation Theology proper.

L.Boff in one of his first reactions to the document regards it as the first real attempt to make Liberation Theology open to the whole Church and to take it out of a purely Latin American context.

The need of a Liberation Theology for the Church - as the Pope himself told the Brazilian bishops - could be seen here as being taken seriously by the official Church as a whole.

2. The relative independence of the LOCAL CHURCHES has been recognized by affirming that they are the ones who carry the final responsibility of how the general principles proposed by the document have to be implemented in the concrete situation. (2) This seems

to be one of the reasons why the document has been received so well by many Latin American authors, at least in their first reaction to it.

3. There is a clear acknowledgement that the various liberation movements in the history of the West and in the present time in all parts of the world have to be seen as SIGNS OF THE TIMES which indicate a direction towards which God is leading the world and humankind as a whole. (5-9 referring to the liberation movements in the West over the last 400 years and section 17 referring to the "awakening of consciousness in continental proportions" with regard to liberation in the present time). The recognition of this is particularly important since most Liberation Theologians look at the history of humankind as a gigantic process of liberation. This they do by interpreting the aspirations and clamorings of oppressed and dependent people in the light of the Gospel.

4. The clear affirmation is made of the view (promoted by Paul VI in his Encyclical, POPULORUM PROGRESSIO) that people under oppression have a right to take action to free themselves, and in extreme situations have the right to armed struggle as the "last resort" to put an end to an obvious and prolonged tyranny." (79) The press jumped at this point right away.

5. A very important point is the acknowledgement of the Basic Christian Communities as a "treasure for the Church as a whole" in their "commitment to the complete liberation of man." (69) This is all the more important for two reasons. First, the official Church up to now has taken a rather ambiguous stand about these communities. Secondly, the real soil of Liberation Theology is the Basic Christian Communities where theology is done by constantly reflecting upon experiences in the light of the Gospel. Liberation Theology would never have come into existence without these communities and will only remain a true theology if it continues to be rooted in this soil.

6. There is a positive integration of the BIBLICAL FOUNDATION of Liberation Theology into the document in Chapter Three: LIBERATION AND CHRISTIAN FREEDOM. The Liberation Theologians have constantly been accused of "redactionistic exegesis"; the document makes a serious attempt to recognize the valid meaning of the most quoted scriptural supports of Liberation Theology. Some commentators of the document say one should read the whole document in the light of chapter three.

7. The document mentions the many who "suffer and labor for evangelization and liberation". This point again is worth reflecting on because the magisterium has been very conspicuously silent in the past about acknowledging the suffering, hardship and even death of all those who are engaged in the creation of a more just society in the name of the Gospel.

8. The making of Marxism once again the main danger for Liberation Theology is avoided, although class-struggle and similar deadly errors of this ideology are mentioned again. (19)

## II. NEGATIVE OBSERVATIONS:

1. The insistence that this document has to be seen, read and interpreted in the light of the first document on Liberation Theology (1) which took a rather strong negative approach to Liberation Theology puts, immediately, a series of questionmarks behind anything that will be said in this document.
2. Since the document is so general and at times highly abstract in its approach, it might be quoted by either side to support its view. Or, since it is not concrete enough and addresses itself to a vast range of topics, it will possibly soon be forgotten. In spite of the consultation of bishops, the document remains very theoretical and on the level of general principles. The second chapter particularly is very abstract and offers a philosophical treatise on the concept of freedom which does not really say much. It is a document "from above" to the faithful below.
3. The constant warnings about the aberrations of freedom and liberation and the many dangers involved in the pursuit of liberation kills, at times, the generally positive tone. There is hardly any positive statement that is not followed by an "if" or a warning remark.

The distinction between Christians on the one hand and the 'Church as such' on the other, found in many Church documents, runs through this document again, making it easy to blame the Christians but insisting that the "Church has always taught and defended" this and that, which is simply no more than a cover up and certainly highly questionable.

4. The treatise on sin as the only and ultimate source of all oppression and dependence in the world which results in unbelief and atheism is too highly 'vertically' dealt with. The horizontal dimension which creates the "NON PERSON" in oppressive situations is looked upon as a mere appendix to the first. The historical and social dimension of sin - while mentioned in the document - is not recognized in its enormous grip on human society and its conditioning of all exercise of human freedom.

The result of this lack is that no reference is made to the necessity of SOCIAL ANALYSIS in order to get at the root causes of massive oppression and marginalization.

5. Although the document attempts to situate itself in today's contemporary situation it is not really 'contextual' in the sense that it does not take into consideration the situation out of

which Liberation Theology emerged, namely the "conflictual situation" of the oppressed and dependent masses of people. This leads to the observation that the real 'interlocutor' of the document seems to be the NON BELIEVER AND ATHEISM rather than the NON PERSON and STRUCTURAL SIN which are the main topics of the liberation movements. It is the CONTEXT of the industrialized world and the threat of Marxist ATHEISM that provides the background of the document rather than the conflictual situation out of which Liberation Theology developed.

6. The concept "person" is conceived in purely philosophical and existentialistic terms which stresses in particular the "transcendent value of every human person." This kind of philosophy reveals Pope John Paul's philosophical orientation. What is missing is the historical context in which human beings have to be seen and understood. Their cultural, social and political frame of reference is not taken sufficiently into consideration.

Therefore, the social and the communitarian aspects of being human are neglected in favour of a more individualistic approach to the understanding of human person. The whole anthropological approach remains metaphysical - personal rather than historical-social-political.

7. As a consequence of such an anthropological outlook, work as the key to social questions is too narrow an approach in the situation of Latin America and other countries. The issue in these countries is most often not work but land. The reflection, therefore, should not have been exclusively on "human person and work" but rather on "land and human person." Once again the background of the industrial world seems to have the ascendancy as the true 'contextual background' of the document.

8. Connected with such an approach to personhood is the broadening of the concepts 'poor and free'. They seem to include everyone. The one in prison can be the most free and the richest person on earth can be poorest. (68) The preferential option for the poor of which Medellin and Puebla spoke so much seems to include now everyone no matter how rich and no matter how oppressed he may be. One may ask: if everyone is included to whom is the document addressed?

9. The relationship between history and Kingdom of God once again remains ambiguous. Although the document in quoting Gaudium and Spes does see a connection between the building up of this earth and the Kingdom that is coming (60), the issue is not clarified as to how both are related to each other. This, however, is a lack found in almost all magisterial documents on this matter.

I am sure there are many other points positive as well as negative which one could raise. It is still too soon to give a full appreciation or a thorough critique of the document. I have offered

you these points only as a basis for further reflection and discussion. I hope in a few weeks time we can make more comments on the document. After having read it several times there is one thing I am very sure about: THE DEBATE IS DEFINITELY NOT CLOSED.

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AN ECUMENICAL CONSULTATION  
ON MISSION

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*(The Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) in the U.S.A., and the United States Catholic Mission Association (USCMA) are co-sponsoring an ecumenical mission consultation:*

DIVIDED CHRISTIANS/COMMON WITNESS:  
AN UNFINISHED TASK FOR UNITED STATES CHRISTIANS IN MISSION

*The purpose of this consultation is to explore together common resources for, and ways of collaborating in mission, in order to give a dynamic common witness in the various efforts of both constituencies to proclaim the Gospel, working to achieve a just, humane society.*

*Among the goals of the consultation are: a greater understanding of one another; planning mission together; facing issues together; seeking resolution in areas of conflict and tension; responding where the world demands our unity in mission; and reconceptualizing together the missionary calling. Through the integration of experience and scholarship, Unity and Mission will be the framework in which the consultation will be developed.*

*The ecumenical mission consultation will be held September 27-October 3, 1987 at Mercy Center, Madison, CT. Participation will be by invitation only. For further information please contact either: Dr. James Cogswell - Division of Overseas Ministries, NCCC - 475 Riverside Drive - New York, NY 10115; or Rev. Joseph Lang - U.S.C.M.A. 1233 Lawrence St., NE - Washington, DC 20017.)*

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