

Looking at the Church in Europe, Brazilian theologian Clodovis Boff sees signs of revitalization in the re-discovery of the gospel and in the growth of base Church communities and groups. He sees in Europe anawakening of the spirit of prophecy leading more and more people to denounce unjust structures; groups of laity, religious and clergy moving to work with the marginalized and the poor and learning from them; increasing signs of solidarity with the "Third World" and a new epoch of relations between the Churches of the North and the South - all signs of hope.

There are growing sings of tension between Muslim and Christian communities in many African countries - not least in those countries where the English language is largely the 'lingua franca'. At the same time there are serious and well informed efforts at dialogue. Nevertheless the Bishops, meeting at Lagos, rejected in a forceful Statement the treatment of non-Muslims as second-rate citizens and the discriminatory nature of Islamic laws. The Statement goes on to say that the Bishops "cannot accept any situation where our rights as citizens of our nations are denied because we are not Muslims".

Pope John Paul gave a rare accolade to the members of the S. Egidio Community when they met him at Castelgandolfo in the Autumn of 1986. By means of your community, the Pope said, the Church of Rome lives its option for the poor - not a new thing in the Church - but to-day reaffirmed in a new context, it is the choice of the Gospel, the option of Christ and for Christ. Finally there are News items, Notices and Book Notes.

NEWS AND NOTICES:

THE CHURCH IN THE REALITY OF CUBA TODAY: On February 3rd, Paquita Tamayo, General Councillor of the Religious of the Sacred Heart and Luke Van Looy, Councillor for the Missions for the Salesians shared their experiences and insights about the Church in Cuba today in an "Update" informal meeting at the Sacred Heart Sisters' Generalate. Though the active Church in Cuba to-day is relatively small in number it is united and vital. The group saw two videos: one - of the first national meeting of the Church in Cuba which included all sectors of the Church. Pastoral priorities established at this meeting emphasized prayer, evangelization and incarnation of the Church in the life of the people. The other showed some of the activites of the senior seminarians in Cuba to-day. There was a lively and well-informed discussion on the situation in Cuba to-day.

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 RECONCEPTUALIZING THE MISSIONARY CALLING

Terry Donnelly

(Terry Donnelly, coordonateur du programme de laics missionnaires de Maryknoll, est rentré récemment de Thaïlande où il a servi, avec sa femme Angela et ses deux enfants comme missionnaire avec les Pères de Maryknoll. Dans son article M. Donnelly insiste sur la redécouverte dans l'Eglise catholique que l'appel, la mission et le ministère ne sont pas un droit exclusif de quelques chrétiens "professionnels", comme le sont les prêtres les frères et les soeurs, mais qu'il s'agit d'un droit fondamental, d'un devoir et d'une vocation commune de tous les chrétiens.)

From my "lay" point of view, the Catholic Church is not so much engaged in reconceptualizing the missionary calling but RE-DISCOVERING IT! By sharing with you some of my own experiences and that of the Maryknoll Lay Mission Program, perhaps I can illustrate what I mean.

"Are You a Father?": "Are you a Father?", is a question often asked by Thai people when I visited small villages surrounding Catholic parishes in rural sections of the Archdiocese of Bangkok to do development work. "Yes, I am a father," I would respond, and then add, "I'm a father of two children, two boys."

This response would usually bring a look of disbelief, then surprise when the information was confirmed by my Thai co-worker, and finally by acceptance accompanied by laughter. But the Thai still wondered and asked, "Then who are you?" I answered, "A missioner." But this was not very satisfactory so I begin to answer, "I'm an 'ordinary Christian', someone like you - a baptized person trying to serve the Church and the people." People had never met a Catholic missioner who was not a priest or religious brother or sister.

Vocation Common to All Christians: The above story is a simple one but it has a lot to say about what we as Catholics are rediscovering, namely, that call, mission and ministry is not an exclusive right of a few (i.e. the "professional" Christians, priests, brothers, sisters) but is a basic right, duty, vocation common to all Christians!

What I learned from these experiences was the word for "lay" and "laity" in Thai. This was good for improving my vocabulary but not so good for expressing who I was. Nevertheless, in trying to explain who I was as a "ordinary/common" Christian, I sometimes experienced:

- My commonness as a bond and a bridge a point of connection/ communion which helped us build relationships based on equality and mutuality;
- My commonness as a challenge and an invitation, a point of mutual conversion and transformation. Why aren't you a father or brother? You don't fit into my experience, my framework, my paradigm? Any why not me? What can I do?
- My commonness as a support and encouragement to some Thai Catholics and a few Thai Buddhists in their struggle to build up the Thai Church/Wat and the Thai Society. It worked as a form of mutual witnessing, especially with Buddhists.

In sum, I experienced the extra-ordinary gift of faith, the experience of my commonness acting as a small sign of the good news, bonding/bridging; challenging/inviting; supporting/encouraging!

A Lay-Centered Church: What I experienced is, gratefully, not uncommon as Vatican II has opened up the possibilities of a lay-centered church (a people-of-God-church). This is evidenced by growing lay involvement in the church and programs like the Maryknoll Lay Mission Program (e.g. 3,000 inquiries a year from North American Catholics, 250 serious applications, 25 oriented and sent - increasing to 50 next year, and 115 lay missionaries presently under contract with Maryknoll).

CHALLENGES OF RECONCEPTUALIZING MISSION AND MINISTRY

In re-discovering mission calling from the point-of-view of the laity (People of God), the Catholic Church is faced with the challenges of reconceptualizing not only mission but ministry. Some of the challenges she faces in the upcoming Synod of the Bishops on the Laity in 1987 are:

1. To affirm and promote the diversity of gifts (charisms) in mission/ministry through solidarity and unity not uniformity;
2. To act on the realization that mission is a common call and ministry - a gift of service not the exclusive prerogatives of those in a special class or state of life;
3. To place priority for mission and ministry on the needs of the poor, the community, and the dictates of the Reign of God rather than on the prescriptions of traditional roles;
4. To de-emphasize sacramental ministry and to re-emphasize building up the community through teaching, preaching, admonition, and leadership;

5. To develop structures where laity, clergy, and religious can serve in mission and ministry as equal partners in a full ecclesial response rather than as subordinates with a derived and second class status as missionaries and ministers;
6. To promote a holistic response in mission and ministry not a dualistic one. Where genuine liberation takes place, grace is experienced in the process of the liberation -- grace which acts over against personal and structural situations of sin not over against nature or creation (i.e. natural/supernatural/sacred/secular, etc.)
7. To stress as constitutive to being church and Christian the call to mission and ministry thus destroying once and for all the false idea of sending and receiving churches and the false sense of religious superiority that goes with it;
8. To collaborate in working for the Reign of God (new heaven/earth) with individuals and groups from other Christian communions and from other faith traditions (e.g. Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, etc.). This collaboration must be built on respect and openness to the truth not on triumphalism and manipulation which has characterized some efforts at ecumenism and dialogue. Can we in the Catholic Church stop labeling persons as non-Catholics or non-Christians? Such labeling views those different from ourselves as "nons", as objects. It opens wounds of division rather than being a healing action. Ironically, it often negates the very inclusive love we as Christians are trying to teach.

Finally, I think that we are all challenged to rediscover our laity -- our people of Godness -- and to reconceptualize how we can be more faithful to our common vocation as God's People (laos) in mission and ministry.

Ref: Presentation to Division of Overseas Ministries, National Council of Churches, April 1986.

THE SYNOD ON THE LAITY
SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PREPARATORY DOCUMENT

John O'Leary

(Le P.O'Leary estime que la préoccupation négative et craintive au sujet de "problèmes", ainsi qu'un cadre théorique très sujet à caution, obscurcit sérieusement l'image de l'identité et de la spiritualité des laïcs, dans les "lineamenta" préparés pour le futur synode sur le laïcat. La diminution de la ligne de partage entre le clergé et le laïcat n'implique pas nécessairement que le laïcat néglige le monde, comme semblent le suggérer les "lineamenta". Le rôle baptismal de tous les chrétiens, clergé et laïcs, comprend l'établissement de communautés ecclésiales).

In preparation for next years' international synod of bishops on the Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World Twenty Years after the Second Vatican Council", a set of guidelines or Lineamenta have been prepared to stimulate inquiry and discussion. This document* raises many vital questions concerning the identity and role of the laity. L sets out the purpose of the forthcoming synod on the laity as follows:

- to clarify and deepen the understanding of the 'figure', vocation and mission of the laity;
- to respond, in communion with the whole Church, to the pastoral problems which in our day are connected with the involvement of the laity in the ecclesial community and in civil society;
- to foster and promote in all the laity their spiritual and apostolic vitality in the service of the church in this moment in history. (L:12)

It is my contention that L's way of approach to the pastoral problems actually hinders its attempt to clarify the lay identity and promote lay spirituality and apostolic vitality.

THE 'PASTORAL PROBLEMS' APPROACH

L cites a number of pastoral problems. I shall outline L's percep-

* Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World Twenty Years after the Second Vatican Council: Published by SACBC, Pretoria Pastoral Action Series No. 40 (hereafter referred to as L, with page number).

tion of each of the main problems, assessing whether in fact the problems are as serious as L suggests. While it is recognised that lineamenta documents issued in preparation for synods are frequently designed to provoke energetic reactions, they nevertheless often indicate the presuppositions with which a topic is to be approached, and for this reason they must be carefully and seriously examined.

SECULARISATION: L states that "those lay people who are involved with temporal and earthly affairs..are so influenced by secularisation as to refuse, or at least compromise, that fundamental and unrenounceable link with the faith." (L:10) This statement reflects an apparent belief that there are no exceptions to this rule, and also implies that there are people who are somehow not involved with "temporal and earthly affairs". Leaving these implications aside for the moment, I want to comment on the choice that is always before the church when confronted by phenomena such as secularisation. The church can choose to see such phenomena as threats or as opportunities for good. No doubt many have lost faith through being involved with "temporal and earthly affairs". However, this is not peculiar to the laity, nor does it imply the absence of God's activity in history. If one simply bemoans and regrets secularisation, one can easily become blind to new apostolates and new opportunities for grace. To my mind this has happened in L, and reflects what, for want of a better phrase, I will call the "pastoral problems approach" to the laity. If too much negative attention is given to a problem the church runs the risk of failing to discern the movement of the Spirit in any given event or process.

THE FLIGHT FROM THE WORLD: The content of this problem is not made clear in L.(P.10) "negative flight from the world" is hinted at vaguely. One can only guess that it refers to those lay people who evade their secular responsibilities by adopting quasi-clerical or quasi-religious postures. If this is what it means then it begs this question: If the laity are constantly reminded (as they are in L) that their task is defined by its secular character (L:21) and that religious and clergy are concerned with the sacred, then is it not inevitable that some lay people will incline towards the "sacred arena", particularly if they think that their salvation depends on it? To my mind, this preoccupation with a perceived flight from the world misses the point. The authors of L are worried about the "clericalisation of the laity" and the "laicisation of the clergy" (L:10), and they see the way out of this problem in reinforcing the distinction between sacred concerns (the preserve of the clergy and religious) and secular concerns (the preserve of the laity). That this distinction does not hold will be elaborated below.

At this point it must be said that the section in L on the flight from the world is a rather clumsy attempt to present this pastoral pro-

blem: the erosion of the dividing line between clergy and laity. That such a dividing line has eroded is indisputable, but to approach a solution by asserting that the laity are neglecting 'the world' is misleading. It is a good example of the pastoral problems approach in that it gets bogged down in negativity rather than attempting to search for positive opportunities. The preoccupation with the sacred/secular distinction distracts attention from the question "how can the church as a whole-laity and clergy and religious-fulfil its mission in the world? The distinction between clergy and laity is a topic for ecclesiology and should be treated as such, rather than as a moral problem of evasion of responsibility.

THE ECCLESIALITY OF LAY ASSOCIATIONS: Once again L's approach to this is to portray it as a negative pastoral problem rather than as a task for ecclesiological housekeeping. While L does not spell out many specific problems, it states that the "growth of lay groups at times gave rise to new problems for example, "the problem of the 'ecclesiality' of the laity (to what extent, and especially with regard to their temporal activity, can the laity be considered as authentic expressions of the church)..." (L:8) If this is viewed purely as a practical pastoral problem then I think some undesirable consequences arise. Lay groups can feel unnecessarily cautious about encouraging the formation of genuinely lay groups. These feelings are only accentuated when some lay associations are branded as irresponsible manifestations of the so-called "popular church". There have been some astonishing reprimands of such lay associations in recent times. This development has introduced once again, a moral element into a strictly ecclesiological question. The question is not a moral one: are lay people betraying the church? but an ecclesiological one: how does one secure ecclesial co-operation between lay associations and the clerical hierarchy?

A POSSIBLE ANSWER:

I suggest the following as a possible answer to this latter question. What is needed is an institution that will function as a permanent bridge between lay associations and clergy and religious. This institution should be sufficiently local, so as to be cheap and efficient to run as well as being small enough to allow for the degree of intimacy needed to build up trust. Represented on this body would be the local ordinary and other representatives of the clergy and religious, as well as representatives of all lay associations in the area. Such a body is latent under our very noses: the diocesan synod.

Diocesan synods are amply provided for in canons 460-468 of the current Code of Canon Law. Members of lay associations which were represented in synods would feel acknowledged and trusted as members

of the church, while the hierarchy would have regular contact with lay associations without compromising the lay identity of such groups. In an atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect genuine pastoral problems such as deliberate propagation of heresy or practice of injustice by anyone in the church could be tackled jointly. In my view, diocesan synods provide an ecclesiological means for overcoming the fearful recriminations lay associations can encounter at the moment.

THE DANGERS EXPERIENCED IN LAY PARTICIPATION IN MINISTRIES: The pastoral problem perceived by the authors of L here, is a "confusion in the correct relationship which must exist between clergy and laity in the church" (L:9) That such confusion exists, and that it is in part due to an arrogant assertion by some laypeople of the redundancy of clerical orders is undeniable. To anathematise those laypeople who do arrogate clerical functions to themselves may be justifiable, but it is no substitute for clearly defining the respective functions of clergy, laity and religious in the church. Such clear definition is lacking and would, if provided, go a long way to putting the "dangers experienced" into their proper perspective.

There seems to me to be a confusion in church documents between roles and tasks which stem from baptism and roles and tasks which stem from ordination. A good example of this is (of all documents) Lumen Gentium, 31 (cited in L:9).

The primary and immediate task of the laity is not to establish and develop the ecclesial community—this is the specific role of the pastors—but to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world.

Leaving aside the second part of this statement (it overlaps with the section on the secularity of the lay vocation below), the first part of this statement should be more closely examined. It is the specific role of the clergy, according to L, to establish and develop the ecclesial community. What if the ecclesial community is a lay association or a non-clerical religious order?. These are founded and developed by their members, laypeople and religious. The establishment and development of ecclesial communities is not peculiar to the clerical state in the way that consecrating the eucharist and absolving sins are.

It seems to me that the baptismal role of all Christians (clergy & laity alike) includes the establishment and development of the ecclesial community, while the ordination of clergy is for the specific tasks of proclaiming the gospel, consecrating the eucharist and absolving sins. The many other tasks that clergy legitimately fulfil stem from their baptism rather than their ordination, and laypeople share in these tasks. Some examples are spiritual direction, action

for justice and the study of theology.

If the synod of bishops were to clearly use such distinctions in order to clarify the respective roles of laity, clergy and religious, then some of the "dangers experienced in lay participation in ministries" could be eliminated.

THE SECULAR NATURE OF THE LAY VOCATION: This refers to the notion that lay people are in the secular world while those who are ordained or are members of religious orders are concerned with the sacred and are somehow not in the world. This is a difficult concept to understand. L expresses it like this: "The laity possess a unique and undivided identity, in that at one and the same time they are members of the Church and members of society." This identity is spelt out with reference to Lumen Gentium: "Their secular character is proper and peculiar to the laity ... By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will...." (L:21)

In themselves no exception can be made to the thrust of these statements. Lay people are involved in non-ecclesiastical occupations, and their areas of special competence are often (not always, as in the case of professional lay theologians) not specifically ecclesial. But to argue from this premise that the laity have a purely secular vocation while clergy and religious have a sacred vocation is inadmissible. This is for two main reasons:

Firstly it is very difficult logically to separate the sacred and the secular. For example, if a priest is involved in a sacred task when consecrating the eucharist, then a strict separation of sacred and secular vocations would impel us to say that the laity are involved in a secular task when they participate in the liturgy and receive the eucharist. All of creation is secular, and all the baptised together are a sign that the Spirit is breathing new life into creation, or that the sacred is transforming the secular. To separate the clergy and the laity along the lines of the sacred and secular vocations is in my view absurd.

Secondly, if one asserts that the lay vocation is uniquely secular and that the clerical vocation is sacred by virtue of the sacred tasks they are ordained to perform, then how is one to describe the vocation of those Christians who are not clergy and not laity, ie unordained religious? Far better to acknowledge that all Christians are part of the transformation of the secular by the sacred, and have done with the impossible task of apportioning sacred and secular tasks within creation. By these remarks I do not mean to suggest that priests should no longer consecrate the eucharist and absolve sins-far from it:- I am simply suggesting that the 'sacredness' of working for justice,

working on refuse-tips and getting married (to cite just a few examples) should be stressed more. In the same way the 'secular' power of repentance, eucharistic sacrifice and the communal witness of religious orders should be emphasised. To separate the sacred from the secular in the way L does is to separate the salt from the earth.

It seems to me that the confusion of categories stemming from the attempt to separate sacred and secular spheres underlies many of the 'pastoral problems' outlined above.

RESUME

The fearful approach to the question of secularisation can blunt the keenness with which the church penetrates new areas of evangelization. The 'flight from the world' by some laypeople from their responsibilities into quasi-clerical security could be diminished by:

- affirming the non-clerical and non-religious identity of the laity in a positive way;
- treating the distinction between clergy and laity as an ecclesiological problem and not as a moral problem of evasion of responsibility.

The permanent use of Diocesan Synods would practically guarantee the ecclesiality of lay associations, and would provide a vehicle for joint disciplinary action by the whole local church in the event of some lay association or individual deliberately refusing ecclesial co-responsibility.

The respective functions of laity and clergy should be clearly distinguished in terms of responsibilities which stem from baptism and responsibilities which stem from ordination.

The distinction between sacred and secular should be correctly understood as a distinction between God and creation: it should not be used in an illogical way to make distinctions within creation, still less should it be used to reinforce a sense of inadequacy on the part of the laity.

'Pastoral problems' which have ecclesiological solutions should be handled as such, rather than be viewed as stemming from the moral aberrancy and disobedience of the laity.

TOWARDS A NEW VISION OF LAY VITALITY: There are a number of passages in L which could provide a compelling and inspiring vision of lay life if they reflected joint responsibility for 'the temporal realm' on the part of the whole church (clergy, laity and religious alike). This vision would be impelling if the respective identities and roles (vocations and missions) of the laity,

the clergy and religious were clarified in ecclesiology.

The pastoral problems approach portrays various phenomena in the church's life fearfully and confusedly, rather than boldly as opportunities for adaptation and growth. Too often positive notions like "(the laity) carry on the mission of the whole christian people in the church and in the world" (L:20) are immediately glossed over and rationalised in terms of the "secular vocation of the laity".

Enough has been said to indicate that there are serious theoretical weaknesses in L. A negative and fearful preoccupation with 'problems' coupled with a highly questionable theoretical framework, would seriously obscure a clear picture of lay identity and spirituality.

What could happen at the Synod: Not to conclude on a negative note, I would like to indulge in a little star gazing. First of all, let us look at some things which could happen at the Synod of bishops in Rome. Extensive use could be made of lay consultants. The secularised (ie no longer practising Catholic) parts of society could be welcomed as new areas for imaginative evangelization, and ways examined in which laypeople could do this together with clergy and religious. Careful attention could be given to a realistic definition in ecclesiological terms of what a lay person is in relation to religious and clergy. The experiences of genuine lay groups and individuals could be described and carefully analysed to discern the nature of lay identity and spirituality in themselves, rather than define them in relation to other categories of christians like religious.

The use of Diocesan Synods could be recommended as a vehicle that would ensure the ecclesiality of lay associations and co-responsibility in the church. The incorrect use of the distinction between sacred and secular could be finally and solemnly buried. It could happen that pastoral problems might not be the focus of attention and that a new era of vitality, autonomy and co-responsibility in the life of lay people might be initiated and celebrated.

Secondly, looking to the future, it could happen that many lay people will feel free to start their own groups and associations. These might be professional groups, neighbourhood groups, prayer groups, social action groups, theology study circles or whatever. They would have a representative on the diocesan synod, which would meet regularly. They would be run entirely by laypeople, who would seek the advice and help from religious and clergy when necessary. They would participate in local penitential and eucharistic rites. They would co-operate and maintain close contact with the priest in their area and would keep the diocesan authorities in touch with their activities through the synod. Membership of the

synod would be the criterion of orthodoxy and ecclesiality. Individual lay people would have contact with the synod through their parish council or equivalent representatives.

Perhaps then it will be seen to be true in a new way that the laity "carry on the mission of the whole christian people in the church and in the world" (Lumen Gentium 31).

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THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE FIRST
WORLD CHURCH IN EUROPE

Frei Clódovis Boff

En observant les Eglises d'Europe, le théologien brésilien Clodovis Boff a constaté des signes de renouveau et d'espoir dans la redécouverte de l'Évangile et dans le développement de communautés de base et de groupes ecclésiaux. En Europe il y a déjà des groupes de laïcs, de religieux et de religieuses, de prêtres et d'autres, qui sont en train de changer leur attitude au sein de la société, se mettant à travailler avec les marginaux, et parfois même à vivre avec eux. Aujourd'hui, en Europe, les pauvres sont les chômeurs, les "nouveaux pauvres" (les retraités, les drogués, etc), ainsi que les travailleurs et les personnes sans salaire. Le Père Boff nous rappelle que la loi de l'évangélisation est celle de l'incarnation: c'est pourquoi il nous faut nous réinsérer dans le peuple et avoir des contacts étroits avec les pauvres. Il y a en Europe un réveil de l'esprit de prophétie qui pousse à dénoncer les structures injustes, telles que la mafia, la course aux armements nucléaires, la situation des travailleurs immigrés, la société de consommation, etc. La solidarité avec le Tiers Monde et une nouvelle ère dans les rapports entre les Eglises du Nord et celles du Sud basés sur une communion et un partage authentique sont d'autres signes d'espérance.)

Differences between Europe and Latin America: First of all I want to say that I am well aware that Europe is not Latin America, and that it is not possible to transpose solutions mechanically from us to you.

Historical difference: First, there is a great historical difference. Christianity in Europe has existed for almost 2000 years, whereas in Latin America it has a history of only just

under 500 years.... And typically Latin American Christianity can be dated precisely; it is no more than 15 years old, since it began at Medellin (1968).

For its part, the church in Europe has a long history behind it. This means it is a church full of traditions. Traditions are ambivalent: some are consistent developments of an initial impulse, while others are extraneous accretions which cling to an institution and become obstacles to its progress. They can be both an enrichment and a burden; it all depends on what they are in themselves and how people relate to them. Of course, if we spend all our time preserving and restoring, where will we find the time to create and go forward?

Social differences: The second great difference between the Latin American and European churches is social. By this I mean that the European church is situated in a 'developed' or central society, while our church is one which belongs to an 'underdeveloped' or peripheral world. It is one thing to do pastoral work in an advanced capitalist (neo-capitalist) society, with a liberal-democratic political structure, and another to do so in a society dominated by 'wild-cat capitalism' (paleo-capitalism) and dictatorial states.

Indeed, in our situation the contradictions are sharper and the challenges more violent. Here faith is more forcefully challenged to prophecy and martyrdom. There are knife-edge situations in which a Christian's only choice is between heroism and treachery: there are no middle terms.

European societies are also class societies, with the same pyramid structure. The only difference is that in Europe the pyramid has less steep slopes than in Latin America. The reason is that in Europe the middle classes make up almost half the population, whereas in Latin America they are around 20%. And since the middle class usually acts like a fire blanket to damp down social contradictions, we find that in Europe these are less acute than among us.

Religious differences: Finally, there is a third very clear difference between our church and yours, a religious difference. In Europe the process of secularisation - that is, the growing autonomy of society from the control of the institutional church, is far advanced, having developed along side the growth of modern industrial society. In Europe the church is one thing and politics and economics another (for better or worse).

In Latin America society is predominantly religious. People constantly say that the Latin American people are a people at the same time poor and Christian, exploited and religious. The Puebla conference

was so convinced that the people of Latin America are structurally, and not just accidentally, religious that it spoke of its 'radical substratum' (paras 1&7), 'which has left its mark on its continent's essential historical identity and forms part of the cultural matrix of the continent' (para 445).

In addition, the (oppressed) people of Latin America never underwent (and so is not marked by) anti-church or anti-clerical experiences, as happened in Europe, particularly through the work of the communist movement among the working class. Only our small political and intellectual elite went through this experience via masonry, liberalism, positivism and communism. It is not that the complicated question of secularisation has not reached and is not continuing increasingly to involve our people. Secularisation is part of global history. Nevertheless, because of a series of factors which we can't go into here, secularisation among us has not taken anti-religious or anti-church forms.

Signs of Hope: So my question is, What are the most promising of the real tendencies visible in the journey of the European church? In order to answer it, I shall distinguish two ecclesial areas corresponding to the two main lines of Vatican II's ecclesiology: the church as the people of God (the document on the church), and the church in the modern world (the document *Gaudium et Spes*).

THE CHURCH'S INNER LIFE

The rediscovery of the gospel: The rediscovery of the gospel is important for the mission of the Church in European society. If you think about it, how is it possible to re-evangelise a society which has once been evangelised without returning to the source, to the message which called forth faith? It is not by multiplying catechisms, reformulating theologies and adding to the number of pastoral letters that we shall set in train the process of re-evangelising the continent of Europe. On the contrary, what we have to do is to go back beyond all these mediations and reach the heart and substance of the faith, and then start off again from there.

We then come up against a difficulty particular to the ancient and cultured Christianity of Europe: how can we rediscover the gospel in its original power behind all the glosses with which it was surrounded by modern culture and which finally have begun to stifle it?

You will excuse me if I am blunt, but you Europeans seem to me dominated by an uncontrollable unconscious urge to turn all problems, even the starkest, into mere 'cultural facts', topics for conversation, articles and inconclusive debates. You possess a vast culture, but it is a dematerialised culture, disconnected from life and apart from history.

The danger here is that defending the gospel with culture in the form of exegetical, historical and sociological learning may mean that we never let ourselves be struck by the 'sword' of the word. The question will always be how much we expect of the gospel. The gospel is only the gospel when read with the eyes of the poor and the hearts of children, that is, believed simply.

Furthermore, how is it possible to evangelise a secular and secularist society without all the original power of the gospel? Only the gospel enables us to understand how we can be and remain Christian while (despite) being in the secularity of the modern world.

Communities and groups: A second fruitful tendency which I see within the life of the church in Europe is the ferment on all sides which is throwing up such a range of communities and groups. My impression is that these groups are like the first tiny bubbles which appear at points on the surface of a pan when it is about to boil. The heat isn't yet sufficient to set all the water moving, as seems to be happening in Latin America at the moment, but the pinpricks which herald this situation are multiplying right across the surface of the European church.

How, anyway, can the fabric of the church be renewed except from below, starting with the ecclesial cells constituted by small communities? It seems to me an illusion to think that the church can be revitalised from the top and through mere institutional reorganisation. Of course, these institutions need to join the dance, but they won't be the ones who start it off. The life of a tree comes from the roots and not from the crown!

Polarisation of Positions: In this connection, I noticed, as I travelled around Italy and Portugal (though the situation is common to Europe as a whole), that there is a great polarisation of positions within the church. On one side is a centripetal tendency, which some people call 'the clerical church', which maintains and reinforces the concentration of power and the separation between clergy and people. On the other side can be seen a centrifugal tendency, called in Italy 'dissent', which has a clearly anticlerical, and sometimes anti-institutional, position and pays for its criticism with real or

formal marginalisation.

This situation, and this is what makes it serious, is not sectoral, is not limited to a few cases. It runs through the whole of the European church. It is not the problem of a few individuals, but of the whole European church. It can therefore be tackled and solved only by all the sections involved. In other words, all of us, pastors and laity, are called to build the church as people of God on the model of Vatican II.

Both Sides Weakened: The juxtaposition of these extreme positions weakens both sides. Without practical legitimacy in the church the groups find their identity and their continuity seriously threatened, and, conversely, if the institutional church does not draw on the vitality of these new, live groups, it is depriving itself of a very special source of renewal, particularly in the case of groups of young people and intellectuals.

It was a great sorrow for me when, after a lecture, I met a young man full of vitality and goodwill who complained that the church gave him no areas to get involved, and that he was obliged to look for them on the edge of the church and even outside it. Many such young people have already lost hope in the church's capacity for renewal.

Winning Over the Institution: I think this is one of the most delicate, and most painful, aspects of your experience as the church in Europe. In Latin America, when we meet resistance from the institution, we are learning with the people that the correct aim is not to fight the institution, but to win it over, to win it over to its true mission, including the liberation of the oppressed.

Our relationship with the institution is thus one of communion and renewal at the same time. The important thing is to renew the institution from within, gradually, little by little winning people's confidence and a steadily growing space for participation. In this journey it is very important to involve pastors, to help them to accompany the people on their chosen path and renew themselves with them. Clearly, this presupposes that the channels of communion, contact and dialogue with them are kept open; moves to close them must never come from us. However, real coming together is the result of practical involvement in the people's journey, in their discoveries, sufferings and struggles.

Reattached to the People: Let us turn to the third tendency within the church in Europe which I think contains the seeds of its future, the question of the poor. The real question, and it is now becoming visible in the church in Europe as well, is the question of the oppressed. Such a question seems to me irreversible, and is tending to become general in the church as a result of the combined effect of the pressure of the Latin American church and of the Roman See, which is in the process of incorporating this thesis in its own way and launching it again at the level of the universal church.

Even in Europe there are already groups of lay people, religious men and women, priests and others, who are changing their position in society, moving across to work with the marginalised and, in some cases, even to live with them. It should be obvious that the 'option for the poor' is not so much a question of preaching as of practice. No document is a substitute for a lived conversion to the powerless. 'Starting again from fundamentals' involves more than speeches: it includes physical, bodily contact with the poor. It is more a matter of feet than head! The law of evangelisation is the law of incarnation: without incarnation no salvation. That is why the hierarchy must be reattached to the people if the European church is to move into the future.

The Poor in Europe: But, you will ask me, what does 'poor' mean in Europe today? Well, Europeans need evangelical discernment combined with social analysis to tell them who their poor are. In general, there is a consensus that the 'poor' in Europe today are the unemployed, the 'new poor' (the retired, drug addicts, etc.), as well as the workers and the dependent unwaged. You may say that the European church is a middle-class church because it is situated among the middle class (half the population), though it still includes a segment of the upper bourgeoisie (2-3%) and a segment of the lower or working class. The movement should be a descent towards the bottom of the pyramid, with the church distancing itself from the privileged classes in order to open itself primarily to the lower classes, who still make up the other half of the population. That is what the 'option for the poor' or 'starting again from fundamentals' means in practice.

PROMISING OUTWARD MOVEMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN CHURCH

Spirit of Prophecy: The first thing that strikes me is the awakening of a spirit of prophecy in the European church. Not only priests, but also bishops are now to be seen denouncing unjust structures, such as the mafia, the nuclear arms race, the exploitation of the Third World, the situation of migrant workers, consumerism, etc. (Europe too doesn't seem short of matter for prophecy!)

I believe that these bishops, who are today rather isolated, will become more numerous, inspiring their brothers in the episcopate to take a clearer and more collective prophetic position.

Certainly the prophecy coming from the periphery will receive considerable backing from the prophecy given in the metropolitan countries, right at the heart of the system, when this First World demands, in the name of justice and the victims of injustice, a 'new international order'.

Politics: A second outward directed tendency in the European church has to do with politics. 'Politics' here has a new meaning, however. It is not just formal party politics (though that shouldn't be excluded), which today is increasingly discredited for being unrepresentative of the mass of the people. In this context it means rather 'grassroots politics', what is sometimes called 'pre-politics'. "Pre-politics" means the vast number of social initiatives illustrated in voluntary service at home and overseas, solidarity with the Third World, the setting up of community groups, etc. Statistics show that in the last 15 years in Italy the number of young people active in political parties has fallen by half, while the number involved in social action had doubled.

This 'work at the base', which is growing particularly in the church, will become more and more significant if it adopts an approach based on systematic participation (working with); if it maintains an attitude of 'healthy secularism', that is without giving itself a 'Catholic' label in a denominational sense and reproducing the old model of Christendom; and, finally, if it succeeds in questioning the social system, calling for a new order, not only in economics but also in culture (anti-consumerism). Social analysis is basic to all of this.

Solidarity with the Third World: The third positive tendency I would identify in the European church's relationship with the world is the growing sense of solidarity with the Third World. This means that the poor of the peripheral countries are now seen and accepted as having the same status as the European poor: if Europe continues to play a part in impoverishing them, it should also play its part in liberating them.

The caravels are coming back: The discussion about 'liberation theology' stimulated around the world through the action of the highest authority of the Catholic Church (perhaps unintentionally) marked the beginning of a new epoch in the relations between the church of the North and the church of the South. I am convinced of this. "The caravels are returning," as Fr. Balducci said.

Latin America (and the rest of the Third World) is beginning to give back to Europe what it received from Europe - as Pius XII foresaw.

This process is taking us beyond the one-side relationships which created dependence between North and South in the Church. We must replace them with relationships of genuine communion. 'Communion' implies reciprocity, and so two-sided relationships, in which there is sharing, not only of theological ideas, but also pastoral experience and personnel.

Ref. CIIR Pamphlet Series. Third World Theology.

Catholic Institute for International Relations, 22 Coleman Fields, London N1 7AF, England.

STATEMENT FROM THE FOURTH PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES OF ANGLOPHONE WEST AFRICA
LAGOS, 20-27th OCTOBER, 1986

Les rapports entre le Christianisme et l'Islam en Afrique Occidentale. Un importante lettre de la Quatrième Assemblée Plénière des Conférences Episcopales de l'Afrique Occidentale Anglophone (Lagos, 20-27 Octobre 1986), attire notre attention sur les tensions entre les musulmans et les chrétiens dans ces pays.

L'Assemblée insiste sur l'origine commune de tous les humains. Tous forment une seule communauté, tous viennent d'une même souche créée par Dieu pour peupler le monde entier. Tous partagent une même destinée - Dieu. La Providence divine s'étend à tous. L'Assemblée examine les points de convergence et de divergence entre les adhérents des différentes religions: ici les rapports sont cordiaux, là, au contraire, ils sont marqués par l'antagonisme.

L'Assemblée attire l'attention sur les nombreux aspects positifs dans les relations entre chrétiens et musulmans et sur la manière dont ils sont concordants. La déclaration continue: "Cependant, en fidélité à nos traditions, nous devons rejeter plusieurs tendances de l'Islam: les non-musulmans traités en citoyens de seconde zone, l'identification de la religion avec la culture et la politique, les non-musulmans qualifiés d'infidèles, la nature discriminatoire des lois islamiques, les lourdes pénalités frappant les chrétiens convertis de l'Islam ou les musulmanes épousant un chrétien.

"Nous ne pouvons pas accepter une situation dans laquelle nos droits de citoyens nous sont refusés parce que nous ne sommes pas musulmans. Nous croyons à l'unité et à la solidarité de tous les humains, mais cela ne doit pas nous faire oublier notre devoir de prêcher l'évangile, la bonne nouvelle, à temps ou à contre-temps, en obéissance à l'ordre du Seigneur" (Mt 28, 19-20).)

Preamble: We the Archbishops and Bishops, participants in the Fourth Plenary Assembly of the Association of the Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa, (Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone - Ed.) together with representatives of our clergy, religious and laity, meeting in Lagos, Nigeria, from the 20th - 27th October, 1986, give thanks to God Almighty, the Father of us all, for his graces and mercies. We praise him for the unity of faith and purpose which in his ineffable goodness he has established among us to become effective, if humble, instruments of his eternal plan to save our sub-region.

1. Multi-Religious Society: Under the inspiration of his Spirit, we have deliberated on the Theme: CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM IN DIALOGUE. Our search for dialogue with Islam is motivated by several factors. Our Church finds itself in a multi-religious society. In their daily life, our faithful have to relate at all levels to Muslims and adherents of the Traditional African Religions. It is therefore necessary that we find or devise ways and means of living in peaceful coexistence with our brothers and sisters who do not follow our religion. It is our view that Christians and Muslims must be free to practise their religion without hindrance.

2. Common Origin: This is the more so since all human beings form one community. All stem from the one stock which God created to people the entire earth. (Acts 17.26) All share a common destiny, namely God. (N.Aet.1) God's Providence, evident goodness and saving designs extend to all. (Wis. 8:1; Acts 14:17; Rom. 2:6-7; 1 Tim. 2:4).

3. Universal Lord: It is also our firm belief that all men and women, even those who do not know or accept God, and God's reign are saved by Christ, the Universal Lord of all.

4. Magisterium of the Church: We are further urged by the fact that since Vatican Council II the Church's attitude towards people of other faiths has become more positive. The

Council's Declaration on Religious Liberty, while asserting that it is in Christ that God has destined the human race to be saved and to reach happiness, declares that the human person has the right to religious freedom which must be given recognition and respected. (n.2)

In the Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, with specific reference to Muslims, the Council teaches that the Church has a high regard for them. She pleads with Christians and Muslims to forget the quarrels and disensions that marked the relations between the two groups in the past. She urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding "so that together we may preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values". (N. Aet.3) His Holiness Pope John Paul II has re-iterated this call on several occasions, especially during his pastoral visits to our countries in Africa.

5. Areas of Convergence and Divergence: We are, therefore, determined to explore all lawful avenues for fostering and maintaining good relationships with our brothers and sisters of the Islamic faith in our sub-region. We think of meetings, exchange of ideas at the intellectual level, but also daily practical dialogue at the grassroots level in the homes, workplaces, schools, playgrounds and so forth.

In this resolve we take into account the fact that there are areas of convergence in theological thinking between Christianity and Islam. Both Christians and Muslims believe in the one Unique Creator God. But we are also not oblivious to the vast differences that exist between us, such as with regard to the Person and the role of Christ in salvation. We note, as well, that terms such as salvation, democracy and politics often do have a connotation for Muslims which is different from the meaning that Christians attach to them. For example, for Muslims religion and culture are the same. It is also observed that within Islam itself there are serious divergences in theological thought and religious practices.

6. We take cognizance of the fact that in our sub-region there are differences in the de facto relationships between Christians and Muslims. While in one or other country the relationship is marked by cordiality, in another it is antagonistic. The method of approach we adopt, therefore, must perforce be adapted to the conditions prevailing in each country.

7. We respect Muslims and their religion. We appreciate the good aspects of Islam. We admire the prayerfulness of Muslims. We are edified by their ascetic fasting. We are inspired by their almsgiving and pilgrimages to Mecca. We want to be friends with Muslims. We Christians should have no enemies. The Lord himself has commanded us: "You have heard that it was said 'Love your friends and hate your enemies', but now I tell you to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matt. 5:43)

8. Need for Evangelization: However, in faithfulness to our own traditions, we must reject many tendencies in Islam: the treatment of non-Muslims as second-rate citizens; the identification of religion with culture and politics; the classification of non-Muslims as infidels; the discriminatory nature of Islamic laws; the heavy penalties meted out to Christian converts from Islam or to Muslim women who marry Christians.

We cannot accept any situation where our rights as citizens of our nations are denied us because we are not Muslims. We believe in the unity and solidarity of humankind but this does not make us forget our duty to preach the gospel, the good news, welcome or unwelcome, in obedience to the Lord's own injunction: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you". (Matt. 28:19-20)

9. Exemplary Life: To improve our relations with Muslims, the best means is prayer. We call upon our faithful to pray constantly to the Father of us all who alone can unify humankind. We are also convinced that in our situation we have to bear witness to Christ by the way we comport ourselves in our daily life. If anything is going to draw Muslims and Christians together, it is the life of love, mercy, compassion, justice and peace that Christians lead. It is for this reason that Vatican Council II "earnestly begs the Christian faithful to conduct themselves well among the gentiles (1 Pet. 2:12) and if possible as far as depends on them, to be at peace with all men (cf. Rom. 12:18) and in that way to be true sons of the Father who is in heaven. (cf. Matt. 5:45)."

10. In this regard, we are happy to note the deep commitment of our laity, especially the women and the youth whose role in fostering dialogue with Muslims is indispensable. We emphasize also the importance of good Catechists in the enduring mission of the Church to promote the Kingdom of Christ. We have also to form our Christian leaders to live their Baptism so as to become the leaven of their Society.

11. Cooperation with other Christians: We believe that in our dialogue with Muslims, cooperation and solidarity with other Christians is absolutely essential. All Christians must bear witness before Muslims that we truly believe that Christ is the only mediator between God and human-kind.
12. Secularity: We wish to define secularity as opposed to secularism as the only viable form of democracy in our sub-region where society is religiously pluralistic. Secularity in the state implies that the state does not favour any one religion to the detriment of others. Such a secular state assures the common good and obviates harm. It respects the conscience of all citizens and allows the full range of religious practice. Secularism, on the other hand, is the systematic muzzling of religion and the exclusion from society of religious influence on public opinion and life.
13. Inculturation: We owe a duty to our people to seek to preserve, promote and transform the richness of our cultures in all their varieties. We realize that if the Church's presence is to be felt in our sub-region, then inculturation should be extended to embrace theological thinking and moral behaviour. We observe that our traditional religion is tolerant and friendly to Christianity. Many of its elements, such as the concept of wholeness of life, the use of symbols, respect for the sacredness of human life, communal existence and friendship, and the close contact between the living and the dead, could enrich the Christian experience to an enormous degree.
14. We recommend that the phenomena of Islam and of our Traditional Religion be studied systematically in our centres of formation. We particularly call upon C.I.W.A. to establish contact with the universities in the sub-region with a view to creating a centre of research on Islam and Traditional Religion. We are anxious that our major seminaries should take the study of these forms of faith seriously. This study should be an on-going concern for priests, religious and other pastoral workers after their formal training.
15. Call to Cooperation: We extend the hand of friendship and fraternity to Muslims in our sub-region to join us in promoting human values such as the dignity of life, the freedom of conscience, the liberty of the human person and the importance of morality. We open our doors to the dialogue of experience. We wish to share our mutual experience of the mystery of God, of love, of revelation and of mercy.

This ardent desire of ours is not motivated by a spirit of proselytism. Our aim is the mutual promotion of the reign of God,

which is the reign of truth, holiness, unity, peace and love. We pray that our good and well-meaning intentions will be met by a correspondingly sincere response from our Muslim brothers and sisters.

The Assembly statement goes on to call attention to the continued need for help from Missionary Religious Institutes that supply their sub-region with personnel; solidarity with their brothers and sisters who are being persecuted in Burundi; their regret at the worsening relations between Church and State in Ghana; strong disapproval of the injustice of apartheid in South Africa; their counsel against the unwholesome foreign intervention in Angola and other parts of Africa; sympathy and solidarity with the Christians of Sudan undergoing persecution and oppression; their distress at the situation in Chad. The statement concludes:

18. Gratitude to God: We renew our thanks to God for our Association, Many things unite our five countries. Together they are rightly called "sister countries". We hope and pray that citizens from any of these countries seeking legal entry into or stay in any one of them should not be unnecessarily hindered by insurmountable difficulties. We pray the good Lord to make our political leaders understand that united we stand, divided we fall.

May God the Father, and Christ Jesus Our Lord, and the Spirit of them both give our people grace, mercy and peace.

Ref. ITCABIC Newsletter: Vol.3 No.VII and VIII, 8 December, 1986.
(Inter-territorial Catholic Bishops' Conference of The Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

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JOHN PAUL II'S ADDRESS TO THE COMMUNITY OF S. EGIDIO

(Un dimanche soir de l'automne 1986, le Pape a reçu la Communauté de S. Egidio, à Castelgandolfo. Pendant cette rencontre, qui dura plus de deux heures, on projeta un certain nombre de diapositives, représentant la vie de la Communauté, son travail parmi les pauvres, ses contacts en Italie et Outremer, dans plusieurs pays d'Europe et de la Méditerranée. Plusieurs représentants des groupes de la Communauté étaient présents et purent parler au Pape de leur vie et de leurs engagements. A la fin, le Pape répondit par un discours improvisé, venant du coeur, et exprimant son plein appui pour leur solidarité avec les pauvres dans le diocèse de Rome.)

INTRODUCTION

On a Sunday evening in the Fall of 1986, the Pope received the lay Community of S. Egidio at Castelgandolfo. During the meeting, which lasted more than two hours, a number of slides were shown, images of the life of the Community, of its work with the poor, of its contacts in Italy and overseas, in various European and Mediterranean lands. Various representatives of groups within the Community were present and spoke to the Pope about their life and commitment. At the end, the Pope replied with an extemporaneous address, spoken from the heart, expressing support for their solidarity with the poor within the diocese of Rome.

John Paul II: I must admit that at the beginning of this meeting I was still thinking of your Community in the way in which I thought of it in 1979, when you came here for the first time. But... things have changed! When I arrived here in this courtyard and saw you here, seated on the ground I understood immediately that it's no longer 1979: one has to think about your Community in a different way today. Indeed you wanted this meeting precisely for this reason: so that the Pope might know how things have gone ahead in the Community of S. Egidio. However in the midst of this progress there has always remained the same guiding principle: your option for the poor "alla romana" - also outside the city of Rome, but above all here in Rome because in a special sense you represent this option within the Church of Rome. Perhaps you are not the only ones to do so, but you certainly represent this option for the poor in a particularly clear and

conscious way. And the option for the poor is certainly fundamental: it is the choice of the Gospel....

The Option of Christ and for Christ: Today this option for the poor is discussed above all in Latin America. But it is discussed also with regard to the universal Church, as the last Synod of Bishops confirmed. Naturally it's not a new thing in the Church. But today this option is discussed and reaffirmed in a new context. The option for the poor is the choice of the Gospel: it is the option of Christ and for Christ. His own choice was exactly that: an option for the poor. And the option for the poor is at the same time an option for Christ, in whatever century, in whatever situation, in whatever country it may be made. This we know well...

Distinctive Identity: Thank you for this distinctive identity of yours, as the Community of S. Egidio, in your option for the poor. By means of this Community of S. Egidio, the Church of Rome lives its option for the poor, whether in its local dimension here in Rome, which I know of at first hand because I meet many people in many parishes and districts of Rome, or in its other dimension outside of Rome, which is associated with the Church of Rome and the mission of the Bishop of Rome. I thank you for what you have told me this evening. It has been important for me, not only to listen, but also to find myself in the midst of all this activity...

The Spirit who is Guiding You: I give thanks to the Spirit of Christ who guides you, who directs you, who places this love in your hearts. This love is the only force that can overcome the evils of the world, finally and definitively... only this love, which Christ taught us and - more importantly - gave to us. As your Bishop, then I am grateful to the Spirit of Christ who is guiding you...

The Community is itself Poor: Finally, then, I want to thank S. Egidio for wanting to raise up this Community in Rome. And S. Egidio has done this in his own particular way: the Community is itself poor, and so you have found a poor church, and, following your option for the poor, you have brought the life of your community to this poor church. I give thanks for this church, and I thank S. Egidio and I give you my heartfelt blessing. It is indeed good that this solidarity has been attained at Castelgandolfo this evening! In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Ref. Letters from St. Egidio. December, 1986, Comunità di S. Egidio - Piazza S. Egidio 3/a - 00153 Roma, Italia.

NEWS AND NOTICES: (continued from page 40)

THE MOZAMBICAN DIASPORA: After returning from a two month visit to Southern Africa, Michael Schultheis, Associate Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service met with SEDOS members to inform them about the growing refugee tragedy in Mozambique. The South African-supported conflict in Mozambique has resulted in a million and a half displaced persons within the country and the flight of half a million into neighbouring countries. Starvation and famine are widespread and have been compared to the situation in Ethiopia two years ago. A number of guests were present at the meeting including an officer from the Rome office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and members of the Community of S. Egidio who sent a shipload of food and development aid to Mozambique recently.

SOLIDARITY IN CRISIS NETWORK (J&P/SEDOS, ROME) The Congregation of the Sacred Heart has received word through RENAMO rebel representatives in Portugal that the three Italian priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehoniani) who were kidnapped in mid-December in Mozambique are alive and will be released after the rainy season.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST: The first meeting/workshop will take place on Thursday 19, February, 1987 at the SVD Generalate. Confirmation of attendance is requested - mail or phone. The Secretariat is preparing a considerable hand-out of reading material at the request of Michael Amaladoss the facilitator.

THE LAITY WITHIN THE ECCLESIAL COMMUNITY: We recommend this Bulletin 106 of PRO MUNDI VITA, prepared by Jan Grootaers. It contains an evaluation of laity in the past and at Vatican II and goes on to deal with Integral Ecclesiology to-day. Grootaers suggests the coming LAITY SYNOD propose that, in the future, the composition of synodal delegations should reflect the differentiated structure of the Local Churches and include representation from the clergy and laity. Available Rue de la Science,7; B.1040, Brussels.

THE WORLD CATHOLIC FEDERATION FOR THE BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE is publishing a new quarterly BULLETIN replacing WORD-EVENT already known to many SEDOS members. This new WCFBA BULLETIN appears in English, French, German and Spanish versions. We are sending a copy of ISSUE No.1 of NOVEMBER 1986 to all SEDOS members with the compliments of the Secretariat of WCFBA. The new format is attractive. This Issue features items from Indonesia, India, Egypt, USA and Switzerland, includes useful information on Bible Translations and reviews books and publications on Scripture.

We recommend SEDOS readers to take out a subscription. It costs a modest USA \$4.00.

CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM ENCOUNTER PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

SUMMER SCHOOL 1987, JUNE 30th - JULY 17th

A I M

The Summer school is designed for Christians already engaged in encounter with Muslims and having at least a basic knowledge of Islam. It aims at deepening this knowledge through study and the sharing of experience.

CONTENTS

- The Qur'ân and Islamic tradition on Christ and Christianity.
- Learning from history: the clashes and encounters of the past.
- The present-day context: Islam as a world phenomenon and its impact.
- Theological perspectives: attitudes and convictions in the post Vatican II Church.
- Faith encounter: how can Christians and Muslims speak together about their deepest concerns.

ENQUIRIES:

Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica
Piazza di S. Appollinare, 49, 00186 Roma. (Tel. 656.11.31)

AN ISLAM MARTYR: The London Tablet has an item in its issue of January 18, 1987: A Muslim Thomas More. It tells of the public execution of Ustadh Taha on January 18, 1985 because he protested against the then President Nimeiri's manipulation of shari'a. Ustadh Taha was already recognised to be a genuine Sufi, or Muslim mystic as is evidenced by his Treatise on Prayer. He maintained, for instance, that a true reading of the Koran and the sunna showed that the Shari'a elaborated for the needs of eighth-century Arabia must be radically revised so as to respond, in the spirit of true Islam, to the human needs of the 20th century. In particular he proposed a series of changes to give women and non-Muslims equality before the law and to prescribe fair treatment of the Sudanese south which enraged President Nimeiri. For this he was martyred. There is more than one face of Islam. "To ignore the witness of Ustadh Taha is equivalent to judging Christianity only by Henry VIII while resolutely averting one's gaze from St. Thomas More."

- end -

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