

meaning of the vows. Christians and Muslims have much to discuss with each other about poverty. The ideal of poverty as a characteristic of the person close to God is not foreign to Islam. In recent years, Muslim preachers have emphasized the Ramadan fast as a way in which Muslims can become more conscious of the forced poverty and hunger which is the daily lot of so many millions of persons.

Following on Tom Michel's paper which is set in the Islamic context we hear from Fr. Bob McCahill, MM who has worked in Bangladesh since 1975. In his letter, Fr. McCahill speaks of his experiences with sincere yet skeptical Muslims who question what he is doing among them. One Bengali straightforwardly told him that to be present among them was not enough. Bob then describes what he calls his apostolate of witness.

Thomas Berry's paper on religion and ecology is not just another reminder of our stewardship over the natural resources of this earth that belong to all. He totally reverses the traditional Christian world view and would propose that we recognize the natural world rather than the biblical world as the primary manifestation of the sacred. A thought-provoking work!

COMING EVENTS:

A LOOK-BACK AT THE SYNOD. A day long SEDOS meeting on NOVEMBER 2, from 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., at the Jesuit Generalate, Borgo Santo Spirito . Please note the new date and place.

SEDOS ANNUAL ASSEMBLY: On DECEMBER 9, from 9.00 to 4.30, at the Jesuit Generalate, Borgo S. Spirito; Topic of the Morning Session: BUILDING INTER-CULTURAL COMMUNITIES IN MISSION SITUATIONS.

EVANGELIZATION: THE CHALLENGE OF MODERNITY.

SEDOS Annual Seminar at Villa Cavalletti, from 15-19 March, 1988. Early registration is recommended.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE: Four evening sessions are planned for the Spring of 1988. They will be conducted by Fr. Michael Amaladoss, S.J. Dates will be announced. If you are interested in these sessions please write or telephone to SEDOS Secretariat at 574.13.50 (new telephone number).

The Eschatology of the Kairos Document

Albert Nolan

(L'article du Père Albert Nolan est d'une importance capitale pour tous ceux qui travaillent dans des situations où prévalent l'oppression e l'injustice. Le Document KAIROS qualifie la crise actuelle en Afrique du Sud de "kairos". Comme l'explique le Père Nolan, le "kairos" est un moment de grâce, une occasion unique, précisément parce qu'est proche l'"eschaton", le jour du jugement. C'est le temps des décisions et de l'action, un temps d'appel à la conversion des oppresseurs et des fauteurs d'injustice. En même temps, le kairos est un temps de joie et d'espérance parce que l'eschaton, le jour de la libération est proche, que les oppresseurs se convertissent ou non, qu'il y ait ou non effusion de sang. Une approche biblique du temps imprègne les réflexions du Père NOLAN.)

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The eschatology of the Kairos Document is implicit. Nowhere is it spelt out as an eschatology and I do not think that those who were responsible for the document were consciously making use of any particular eschatological framework. However, the use that is made of the kairos idea and the proclamation of our present crisis in South Africa as a divine kairos has far-reaching implications for eschatology.

Let me try to unpack the understanding of eschatology that is, I believe, implicit in the Kairos Document. We can begin with some account of the three kinds of time that are represented by the Greek words: chronos, kairos and eschaton.

Chronos: Chronos means time as a measurement. It is the time of measured hours and dates, the time that is recorded on clocks and calendars. An historical epoch in this way of thinking is something that is identified by the date when it began and the date when it ended. It is what one might call quantified time. This is what comes to mind immediately when the word time is mentioned: a quantified measurement. However, this is not the way the Bible thinks of time.

Kairos: This word, on the other hand, refers to time as a quality. A particular kairos is the particular quality or mood of an

event. This is clearly and succinctly expressed in the famous passage from Ecclesiastes (3:1-8):

There is a time for everything;
 a time for giving birth,
 a time for dying,
 a time for planting,
 a time for uprooting,
 a time for killing,
 a time for healing,
 a time for knocking down,
 a time for building,
 a time for tears,
 a time for laughter,
 a time for mourning,
 a time for dancing,
 a time for loving,
 a time for hating,
 a time for war,
 a time for peace.

For the Hebrew, to know the time was not a matter of knowing the hour or the date, it was a matter of knowing what kind of time it was. Was it a time for tears, or a time for laughter, a time for war or a time for peace? To misjudge the time in which one was living might be disastrous. To continue to mourn and fast during a time of blessing would be like sowing during harvest time (see Zach 7:1-3). Time here is the quality or mood of events.

Meaningful to those Involved in the Struggle: This concept of time is not entirely foreign to us. It is particularly meaningful to those who inherit an African culture and even more meaningful when we are involved in an intensified struggle to change the times. We know about times of mourning that make it inappropriate to celebrate a joyful Christmas. We have discussions about whether it is a time for boycotting or a time for returning to school. There is a time for conflict and confrontation and a time for reconciliation and peace.

Prophets Read the Signs of the Times: In the Bible the prophet was someone who could tell the time. He (or she) could see what kind of time it was and what kind of action would be appropriate now. The prophets could read the signs of the times, which means they could interpret the kairos, interpret the signs that would indicate what kind of time it was (compare Mt. 16:3 with Lk 12:56).

God Speaks through this Crisis: Prophecy, however, was not just a matter of knowing one's kairos; it was

also a matter of finding God in it. For the prophets, God determined the different times and therefore it was God who speaks to us and challenges us through our particular kairos. Revelation has a tremendous immediacy here. God is directly involved in the changing times. God speaks loudly and clearly through this crisis or that conflict or some victory over the forces of evil.

A Divine Kairos: This is not to say that every moment of chronological time is equally important or significant and that God can be found equally in every and any event. Every event in history is not a kairos. A divine kairos is a very special and significant time. There are lulls in history when nothing of significance happens. For the Bible such chronological times are simply not history. History is the succession of God-inspired events. The gift of the prophet is the ability to recognise such events, such critical times and to spell them out as moments of truth, as challenges, as opportunities, as times for decision and action. A kairos is a privileged time that not everyone is called to witness or participate in. Such was, of course the time of Jesus and that is why he could say to his disciples: "Happy the eyes that see what you see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see and never saw it" (Lk 10:23-24). But even this is not all. The real specialness and seriousness of a prophetic kairos is determined by its relationship to another kind of time: the eschaton.

ESCHATON

As the word itself indicates, the most important quality of this kind of time is its finality or ultimateness. It is the last time, the final, furthest, utmost or extreme time. The mistake here is to understand this finality in terms of measured chronological time. The finality of the eschaton is a quality that defines what kind of time it is, not a quantified measurement that puts it at the end of a long calendar of events. In fact, finality or ultimateness describes the relationship of some future event to a kairos. The eschaton is a future act of God that has finality for us because it determines the quality, the mood and seriousness of our present time, that is to say, it transforms the present moment into a particular kind of kairos.

But let us be more concrete.

The Eschaton is a Future Event: In the first place the eschaton is a future event. A very important characteristic of all prophetic thinking is that it turns the attention of the people from the past to the future. Prophets are called prophets precisely because they speak about the future. Instead of trying to understand the present in terms of events of the past (for example, Exodus, Mount Sinai or King David), the prophets ask the

people to think of the present time in terms of a future act of God. They challenge the people to break with the past and to look forward to something new: "Remember not the former things", says God in Isaiah, "I am going to do a new thing" (43: 18-19).

The Eschaton is a New Event: The eschaton is a qualitatively and radically new event. It is interesting to notice how often the prophets use the words "new": the new covenant, the new age, a new heart, a new spirit, the new heaven and new earth, the new Jerusalem or simply the fact that God is going to do a new thing. They looked forward to a future in which new and unprecedented things would happen and even when they looked back to the past and the traditions of the past they would interpret them anew in view of the new future. Thus the covenant makes them think of the new covenant to come, the exodus turns their attention to the new exodus and Jerusalem to the new Jerusalem and so forth.

The prophets did not use the Greek word eschaton. When they spoke of the new future they called it "the day of Yahweh", "the day of vengeance" or "the latter days" or "the days that are coming" or simply "the day". Jesus is making use of the same idea when he speaks of "the coming of the kingdom of God."

The New Future is Near at Hand: The first and most important thing that all prophets, including Jesus, have to say about this new future or eschaton is that it is "near", "at hand", "coming soon". The prophets stand up to make the momentous announcement that the "day of Yahweh is near" (see for example Is 13:6,9; Jer 46: 10; Ezek 7:7,12; 30: 3; Joel 1:15; 4: 14, Zeph 1: 7,14; Zech 14:1) and Jesus comes to proclaim that "the kingdom of God is near" (Mt. 4:17 and par). Of course they are not all referring to the same calendar day. The eschaton is a new saving act of God that was imminent or near for them at that time.

God will Put Right What is Wrong: The new saving act of God that will happen on the day of Yahweh is an act of judgment and salvation. God will punish those who are presently doing evil and save or vindicate or liberate those who are now enslaved or in exile or suffering oppression. The Hebrew verb "to judge" means literally "to put right what is wrong". We can say then that the eschaton is an event of the near future in which God is going to put right all that is presently wrong. That will mean punishment for those who are doing wrong and salvation for those who are being wronged.

The Forces of Evil will be Destroyed: In the minds of the Old Testament prophets this future event will take the form of a mighty war in which the forces of evil will be destroyed so that peace and justice may reign on earth. Many of the

prophets give vivid and terrifying descriptions of this mighty war of liberation. For but a few examples, one can read about the imminent destruction of Babylon and Edom in Is 13 and 34 and the terrifying massacre of the Egyptians by the Babylonians in Jer 46:1-24 and Ezek 30, not to mention the many descriptions of the slaughter of the Jewish ruling class in Jerusalem on the day of Yahweh because of all their sins (see for example Joel 2:1-11 and Ezek 37).

The prophets found no pleasure in describing all this horrific bloodshed. They trembled and shuddered at the very thought of it and they described the fear and suffering of so many of the people with great compassion. Theirs is not a dispassionate and objective description of a war, but a prophetic warning about a world-shaking event that will be experienced as a cosmic upheaval that changes the face of the earth and is a turning point in human history. It is an eschaton.

Peace is the Outcome: But the day of Yahweh is not only a day of vengeance, a time of gloom and doom. The prophets were in no doubt about the terrifying seriousness of what was going to happen, the awful seriousness of God's anger. But they never lost hope. On the contrary: the peace, the salvation, the justice and the equality that they were always hoping for would be the outcome of these very wars and upheavals. They have equally vivid descriptions of the peace and happiness that God will bring: when the lion lies down with the lamb (Is 11: 6-9; 65:25) and swords are melted into plough shares (Is 2:2-5; Mic 4: 1-5), when there will be nothing more to fear (Zeph 3:13) and peace and justice will reign supreme (Is 32: 16-17) because the law will be written in the hearts of the people (Jer 31:33) and the spirit of God will be in them (Ezek. 36:26). On that day God will put right all that is now wrong. The oppressors will be destroyed or converted and the poor and oppressed will live in peace (Zeph 3).

This same idea of an eschaton appears in the New Testament when Jesus speaks about the coming of wars and rumours of wars (Mk 13) and the destruction of Jerusalem (Lk 19: 43-44; 21: 20-23; 23:28). This he speaks of as the birth pangs of God's kingdom (Mk 13).

A Moment of Grace: However, for Jesus and the prophets the destructive side of the eschaton, the bloodshed, is not inevitable. A kairos is a moment of grace, a unique opportunity precisely because the eschaton or day of reckoning is near. It is a time for decision and action, a time for oppressors and wrong-doers to be converted. And at the same time, the kairos is a time for rejoicing and for hope because the eschaton as the day of liberation is near at hand - whether the oppressor is converted or not, whether there will be bloodshed or not. The element of hopefulness and expectancy in any genuine kairos should not be overlooked. It is indeed one of the constitutive elements of a divine kairos, because you cannot have a

kairos without an eschaton. The two are paralleled again and again in the Bible in statements like: The time has come, the end is near; the time has come, the day of Yahweh is near; the time is now, the kingdom is near; the kairos had come, the eschaton is near.

The Eschaton is Near: Here again we would need to be reminded that the nearness of an eschaton is not a matter of chronos or measured time. In other words, a prophet would not be able to tell you the day or the hour when all these things will happen. Jesus makes this quite clear when he says that nobody, not even he himself, knows the day or the hour (Mk 13:32 and par). But the impossibility of pinning the eschaton down to a chronological date did not make Jesus or the prophets any less certain about the central truth that their eschaton was near. What they are speaking about then, is another kind of time relationship, the extremely close relationship between the present kairos and a future eschaton.

If we believe that war, revolution, liberation or any other total upheaval is imminent this will colour our whole understanding of our present reality. Once we realise that something totally new is about to happen, we are already living in a new time. Or if we come to believe that the day of reckoning is upon us, we are forced to decide, to make our choices and take sides immediately. It is the approaching eschaton that turns our present crisis into a make-or-break kairos.

Reading the Signs of the Times: That leaves us with the question of how one is to know that there is an eschaton on the horizon. The answer is quite simply that we discover this, as the prophets did, by reading the signs of the time. If one interprets one's own time correctly and especially if one can see the events of one's time with the eyes of God, then one sees clearly what all the signs are pointing to. One can foresee what is going to happen sometime in the near future, even if one cannot calculate the exact day or the hour.

ESCHATOLOGY

What does all this mean for our modern theories about eschatology?

Modern eschatological theories were formulated, in the first place, as a return to the Bible. They were trying to move away from the thoroughly unbiblical supernaturalism of treating the eschaton as a parallel, timeless, heavenly world that one enters into after death. That, we know, makes no sense of what Jesus and the prophets were saying about their eschaton.

What all the theories seem to have overlooked however, is that

the Bible is not dealing with general religious truths. The message of the Bible is timebound, not in the sense that it reveals something about chronological times and dates, but in the sense that it records the quality of previous times in order to bring us face to face with God in our time.

Von Rad expressed this long ago apropos of the message of the prophets:

It is all important not to read this message as if it consisted of timeless ideas, but to understand it as the particular word relevant to a particular hour in history, which therefore cannot be replaced by any other word. The prophetic word never tries to climb into the realm of general religious truth, but instead uses even the most suspect means to tie the listening partner down to their particular time and place in order to make them understand their own situation before God.

The Same God, the Same Revelation, the Same Eschaton: For the Israelites the war against the Canaanites and the war against the Philistines was the same kairos - a time of war. For Jesus' contemporaries the issue was whether a war against the Romans would be the same kairos or not. Similarly the exodus from Egypt and the exodus from Babylon was qualitatively the same event. Thus events that are chronologically different but have the same quality of finality and ultimateness are one and the same eschaton for the people who experience them as such. They are all the death and resurrection of Jesus - foreshadowed or made present again. They are all the exodus or passover. They are all the coming of God's kingdom. Because in these chronologically separated events what we have is the same God, the same revelation, the same challenge and the same hope.

With this in mind we can return to the Kairos Document and its implicit eschatology.

THE KAIROS DOCUMENT

The Kairos theologians have drawn the conclusion that the present moment in South Africa is a kairos, but they have not spelt out very clearly and in a truly prophetic manner why this particular moment should be regarded as a divine kairos. Reference is made to the conflict between oppressor and oppressed and to the division in the church which claims the loyalty of both the oppressor and the oppressed. That indeed is a crisis and does raise some serious questions about the meaning of Christianity but in and by itself it does not make our present time a kairos.

What is not explicit in the Kairos Document, although it is implied throughout the document, is that what we are now facing is our eschaton, what all the signs are now pointing to is that the day of liberation is near. Apartheid's days are numbered. In the near future this whole oppressive system is going to be utterly destroyed and a totally new, liberated and peaceful society will be built up in its place. The people are determined to do this and to do it soon and all the signs indicate that this drive towards liberation and peace through justice is now unstoppable. Of course it will be resisted, violently resisted, but it can no longer be stopped. This means that we must expect, unfortunately, more violence, more conflict and possibly more bloodshed before our society can be turned completely upside down to become a land of justice and peace.

The Day of Reckoning is Near: In religious or theological terms, this is our eschaton. The day of Yahweh is at hand. The day of reckoning when God will put right what is wrong in our country is near. The terrifying seriousness of God's anger and love, of God's justice and mercy are about to descend upon us in a manner that might well make what the Old Testament prophets were talking about look like child's play. God is no less involved here in our present crisis and in the upheaval that is about to take place, than in the crisis and in the upheavals of the history of Israel.

A Time of Judgment and Salvation: That is what makes our present time in South Africa a truly prophetic kairos. A time of judgment and salvation. A time for real fear and trembling. A time when everything is at stake. A time for taking a clear stand. A time for tears and sadness that is nevertheless fraught with hope and joyful anticipation.

Time for Repentance and Radical Change: But it is also a time for us to act in the name of God, as the prophets did, to minimise the bloodshed. It is the sort of time when we should drop everything to proclaim from the rooftops that the day of reckoning is upon us and that the day of liberation has dawned. It is a time to appeal for immediate repentance and radical change; a time to call upon all in the world who can still hear the voice of God to do everything in their power, and at whatever cost to themselves, to hasten the downfall of the apartheid regime and so bring the violence of oppression to a speedy end. Now is the time. God is near. That is the kind of eschatology that reverberates through the Bible. It has the same feel as the eschatology of the prophets and of Jesus himself.

Ref. Missionalia, Vol.15, No.2, August 1987

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DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLANNING WITH BASE COMMUNITIES

Bishop Antonio Fragoso

(Mgr. Antonio Fragoso, évêque de Crateus, dans le Nord-Est du Brésil, a été décrit par le Prix Nobel de la Paix Adolfo Peres Esquivel comme un "pasteur qui marche avec son peuple". Dans cet article Mgr. Fragoso réfléchit avec nous sur la manière dont son diocèse est passé d'un processus terre-à-terre de planification pastorale, à celui qui a été lancé dans chaque paroisse par les petites communautés de base avec l'appui du diocèse de base avec l'appui du diocèse. Voz e Vez - "parle et vote" - devrait être rendu à la Conférence Episcopale du Brésil. Le diocèse n'envisage pas de nouvelles assemblées diocésaines dans le but d'une planification d'ensemble ou pour donner des directives qui devraient être incorporées dans les projets et les situations de toutes les paroisses.)

INTRODUCTION: In 1964, Bishop Antônio Fragoso arrived in the newly formed diocese of Crateús in northeastern Brazil with a dream: to create a church of the people. The diocese of Crateús was predominantly rural. Only 12 percent of the population lived in towns; 88 percent in the country, half of this population landless and 90 percent of the adults illiterate. For sixteen years, Bishop Fragoso laboured to fulfill his dream, sharing his vision and spirit with fellow priests, nuns, and laity. Ideals moved to accomplishments as trade unions were formed, religious education workshops were set up, participation in community affairs began, and politicization became recognized as an organized quest for the common good.

In his own words Bishop Fragoso tells us of his experiences with base communities and planning:

The Shock that Changed Our Way of Doing Pastoral Planning: In 1974, the diocese of Crateús was ten years old. But I decided not to have a celebration. I wanted to avoid anything like triumphalism on that occasion.

I invited the entire diocese to draw up a balance sheet of our ten year journey together. And we discovered something that, for me, came as a shock, and in large measure determined the direction of later work.

I had spoken with such enthusiasm of "the people as the agent of its own progress," as "protagonist of its own history." I had con-

demned "colonialist and neocolonialist interference" in all their forms. I had claimed that the church had been the "tool of colonizers" in the days of discovery and evangelization.

What I now discovered was that I had been doing the same thing all over again in Crateús!

Previous Method of Pastoral Planning: True, I had paid a great deal of attention to the CEBs. But take our diocesan assemblies. Every year we held an all-diocesan meeting. Some one hundred representatives from our ten parishes would be in attendance. For a whole week, we would conduct an evaluation of our work. We would invite a knowledgeable theologian to advise us in our theological reflection, and we would work out directives for the use of the parishes in setting up their pastoral plans. I had fallen victim to authoritarian centralism-with nicer names, of course, and I had committed it only unconsciously or semiconsciously-but there it was. This was an enormous shock for me on our tenth anniversary.

Each Tiny Community Designs Its Own Pastoral Plan: Radical measures had to be taken. In the the diocesan pastoral process, voz e vez - "voice and vote" - would have to be restored to the CEBs. We would hold no more diocesan assemblies for the purpose of overall planning, or for the elaboration of directives to be incorporated into all the different parish plans. Instead, I asked each tiny community to gather in its own locale, draw up an accounting of its pastoral practice in the year just past, and propose its own pastoral plan for the year to come.

The Base Communities Articulate their Objectives: The pastoral teams of each parish took these plans, just as they came from the little communities, read them, and were helped to discover the objectives of these communities and the routes they had selected to attain them. When any of this was not clear, the plan would be returned to the base community that had drawn it up with the question, "What do you want to say? What do you have in view?" And the community would have to make its proposal more explicit. But it was not a matter of having it corrected by the parish team.

Discerning the Underlying Expectations: Then the parish team would try to discern the underlying expectations of the plans. What did this particular little CEB expect of the parish team? These hopes were often unexpressed. But they were there. Finally, with these expectations before them, the parish team would develop a response, in the form of its own program for educational support.

And so the pyramid had been turned upside down. Now the planning was done basically at the grass roots. And the ones to do the listen-

ing - the ones to be at the service of the others, for the development of each parish's respective plan - were the parish team.

From the Parish Teams to the Diocesan Council: Now the ten parish teams brought their programs for educational support to the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The council would read and reflect on each one, seek to identify its implicit expectations, and work out a - still very imperfect - general educational program.

Of course, the process as I present it here is a little idealized. In practice it was very incomplete and imperfect.

Our Pastoral Practice is a Journey: Our pastoral practice is always one of hesitation and groping. We take two steps forward and one step backward. What we do is not brilliant, and not triumphalistic. It is not intended to be a blueprint for anyone else. It is only an experience lived by many sisters and brothers, but it is lived in their very flesh. As I examine it, with my own eyes and from my own outlook, I find that I can offer it as an example of one journey among so many others, and thereby try to be a help to others as others are a help to us.

Ref. Don Antonio B. Fragoso "Face of a Church", Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y., 1987, pp.37-39.

The Vows of Religious Life in an Islamic Context

Thomas Michel, SJ

(Dans cet article, le Père Thomas Michel, SJ; du Secrétariat pour les Non-Chrétiens, se demande comment nous pouvons expliquer nos vœux de religion au Musulmans, pour qu'ils puissent voir dans notre engagement un façon légitime de suivre le Christ. Il indique des éléments de l'enseignement de l'Islam ainsi que l'expérience historique de la communauté musulmane qui sont des occasions favorables pour leur faire apprécier la signification des vœux. Chrétiens et Musulmans ont de quoi discuter ensemble sur le sujet de la pauvreté. L'idéal de pauvreté, caractéristique d'une personne proche de Dieu n'est pas étranger à l'Islam. Dans ces dernières années des prédicateurs musulmans ont mis l'accent sur le jeûne du Ramadan, comme un moyen de conscientiser les musulmans au sujet de la pauvreté forcée et de la faim qui sont la part quotidienne de millions de personnes.)

I would like to concentrate on three questions. How do we explain our vows to Muslims so that they can understand our commitment as a legitimate way of following Jesus? Are there elements in Islamic teaching and the historical experience of the Muslim community which provide an opening for them to appreciate the meaning of our vows? Finally, what is the evangelical witness we want to express to Muslims by our vows?

Our Vows are Life Projects: It seems to me that our starting point in bearing witness among Muslims to the evangelical ideals embodied in our vows is the reminder that our vows are ideals, life projects, goals. We, like the church itself, are sinners, pilgrims on this path through life. All of us can be poorer, more obedient, more chaste. The Christian life, and that of the vows, is thus a continual reconversion to Jesus' message, a new start every day in picking up our cross and following him. It is based on our reliance upon God who is patient and merciful, whose forgiveness and strength are always at hand.

Vows are not a Matter of Salvation: A second preliminary point that we must make clear to our Muslim friends is that the vows are not a matter of salvation. The rich young man who came to Jesus to learn what he must do to attain salvation was told that he must keep the moral commandments of the Jewish

law - he must not steal or kill, he must honour his parents. "Do this", said Jesus, "and you will be saved". It was when he expressed a desire to go beyond what was necessary for salvation that Jesus began to speak of perfection. "Go, sell all that you have, give the money to the poor, and come follow me".

Going Beyond What is Necessary: This is not a concept foreign to Muslims. The Qur'ân teaches that on the last day, people will be divided into three groups: the people on God's right (the saved), the ones on God's left (the damned), and the "winners", "those who are brought close". In other words, a good Muslim should not be satisfied with fulfilling the basic obligations but seek a close relationship with God through good works which are not commanded.

Jesus was Among 'Those Brought Near': Do we have any model whose exemplary life shows what it is like to be "among those brought near"? The Qur'ân mentions by name only one person as certainly "min-al-muqarrabîn". That is Jesus. In Sûra âl Imrân, Muhammad is told to recall:

When the angels said, "O Mary! Behold, God brings you good news of a word from Him, whose name is the Christ, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the hereafter, one of those brought near (to God) (3,45).

Following Jesus' Example: To Muslims we say that we have chosen this life, we believe, at God's invitation, in order to follow Jesus' example, to devote ourselves fully and foremost to seeking God's governance over our lives and to follow the path of Jesus' guidance towards a close, loving union with God. Worldly wealth is a blessing from God, marriage is evidence of God's saving presence in human love, freedom to act is a mark of human stewardship before God. We affirm with Muslims, that these are good things, but we have chosen poverty, chastity, and obedience in order to follow Jesus more closely "in seeking first God's kingdom". We are Christians who want to be among "the brought near to God" by going beyond what is required. Our model is Jesus, who was, in the words of the Qur'ân, "min al-muqarrabîn".

OBEDIENCE

When we turn to the individual vows, it would seem that obedience would require the least explanation to Muslims. The very name of the religion in Islam could be expressed as "obedient submission to the sovereign God". Muslims know that obedience to God's message in the Qur'ân does not mean a fatalistic abdication of their human responsib-

ility and personal commitment. According to Islam, obedience requires "the seeking of knowledge and science", the undertaking of a faithful stewardship over the natural world, the duty to build a society where God's will is sovereign.

Obedience in Community is Orientated Towards

Carrying Out God's Will on Earth: According to the Qur'ân, it is not only to God and the prophet bearing God's message to whom obedience is owed, but, for the proper ordering of the community, to the fallible leaders in positions of authority. Why do some of us take a promise of obedience in our religious congregations? As do Muslims, we recognize that those in authority are erring, limited men and women and we do not set them up as rivals in our obedience to God; but for the good ordering of our communities, that they may be oriented towards carrying out God's will on earth, we promise to obey those who are in authority. We consider that this is a service on their part which they make to the community, as Jesus has taught us:

Among pagans, their kings lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are given the title "Benefactors". This must not happen with you. No, the greatest among you must behave as if they were the youngest, the leaders as if they were the ones who serve. (Luke 22, 25-26).

Continuing Reminder of Our Status in the Universe: But our vow of obedience is not merely a pragmatic decision to promote smooth internal government, but reflects a central element of our faith: "I come to do not my will but that of God who sent me". Our vow of obedience indicates a commitment not to seek any type of self-fulfillment apart from God's will, not to set up my own whims, my own "ego" as a rival to God. In our vow of obedience there is, thus, this "ascetical" element of "denying ourselves", much as the Sûfî novice in Islam must begin by promising obedience as the first and constant element on the spiritual path. Our vow of obedience is a continuing reminder of our status in the universe, that we are not the autonomous masters of our destiny, but stand always before God in a relationship which is determined by our obedience to God's commands. As it says in the first letter of John:

Those who keep God's commandments,
live in God and God lives in them (1 John 3, 24).

Muslim Judgment on Christians: The judgment which Muslims often pass on Christians is that we are lax, that we ignore or downplay God's role as Commander or Ruler in the universe, in our societies, and in our individual lives. They feel that we are too ready to replace God's Law with our own laws. They feel that we utilize the commandment of love as justification for

making religion easy and comfortable. As we allow ourselves to be challenged by these criticisms, it would be good to reflect on our vow of obedience to rediscover its deeper meaning in relation to the human status in the universe as a contingent, subject being who is taught to pray "Your will be done on earth, as in heaven".

POVERTY

The ideal of poverty as a characteristic of the person close to God is not foreign to Islam. There are very many hadith reports which describe Muhammad's simple manner of life: the unostentatious house in Medina, the frugal meals, the unadorned style of dress of Muhammad and his wives. Yet Muhammad is also pictured in the hadith as someone who could enjoy the good things of this world, and the Qur'ân describes things like pearls from the sea, leather clothing, and good riding animals as blessings from God. The Islamic ideal, formed by the example of Muhammad, is that of a simple, unassuming way of life in which one can appreciate and give thanks to God for the simple pleasure reaped from the natural world.

Condemnation of Wealth Without Social Consciousness: However, the hadith reports discourage the heaping up of wealth and warn of the dangers of being rich. One of the strongest condemnations in the Qur'ân is directed against those who have wealth without a social consciousness towards the poor. The Qur'ân states unequivocally that they will burn in hell who have wealth and do not help the poor in their midst. It is interesting to note that the motivation given is neither charity nor justice, but obedience. It is God's will that those who have must share with those who do not, so that all can live.

Concrete Forms of Expression: Christians and Muslims have much to discuss with each other about poverty. To Muslims formed in the Sûfî tradition, Christians should have little difficulty explaining our vows as consequent upon our desire to follow Jesus on the path of perfect union with God. With all Muslims, there is the question of God's will, which we Christians elaborate in terms of love and service and justice, demanding a concern for the poor which is not limited to good intentions and sympathy, but finds concrete forms of expression.

Alms-giving to Relieve Poverty: The third pillar of Islam, the zakât or poor tax, is directed not only towards redressing injustice in society and providing for all, but also towards reminding each Muslim that God holds him and her responsible for the other members of the umma. Muslims are also encouraged to give sadâqa (alms) to relieve the poverty of all, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In many Ramadân sermons I have read and heard in recent years, Muslim preachers have emphasized the Ramadân fast as a

way in which Muslims can become more conscious of the forced hunger which is the daily lot of so many millions of persons.

Islamic Answer to Structural Oppression: In Christian circles much has been written about "solidarity with the poor" and the need to struggle to change those in-built societal and international structures which perpetuate economic systems which keep the mass of humanity poor, so that a small number can live comfortably with more than their share of God's gifts. The Islamic answer to structural oppression is usually the building of an Islamic society which would have in-built safeguards against unjust economic systems. It is proper for Christians to be skeptical and seek more information from Muslims in order to separate insight and planning from mere rhetoric, but any such dialogue must presume that Christians themselves have clear vision about how a world which promotes more equitable opportunities for all can be built.

Communal Witness of Poverty is Not Visible to Muslims: We should be aware of the judgments, sometimes well-founded, which Muslims make concerning the Christian practice of poverty. While they are impressed by the often striking personal poverty of brothers, sisters, and clergy, they sometimes mention that on a communitarian basis, this poverty is no longer visible. They feel that vowed religious display a genuine concern for helping the poor, while themselves standing apart from the life of the poor. They think that we have an inexhaustible fund of assistance, whether from Propaganda in Rome, or from foreign funding agencies in Germany or the United States, to carry out our projects. This, they feel, puts us at an unfair advantage over against local initiatives which have no outside funding. This is certain to remain a cause of tension between Christians and Muslims for years to come. It should challenge us Christians to continually reexamine our methods and motivations in order to make our witness ever clearer and more unambiguous.

CHASTITY

One of the most common causes for misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims stems from our vow of chastity. In all countries where there are Muslims, our celibate state is widely regarded as unnatural, against the intentions of God, a rejection of the wholesome goals of begetting and raising children. There is a suspicion that vowed religious often do not live their vow, and if they do, it results in their becoming stunted, unfulfilled, unhappy individuals. This is one of the greatest challenges for Christian religious living in a Muslim environment and one which offers great possibilities for a witness to Christ.

Devoting Our Energies to Building God's Reign on Earth: Our motivation, as for

the other vows, must always be explained by the Gospel of Jesus. We believe that celibacy is not something which we have invented on our own, but an invitation and a counsel which we have received from Christ. By our promise of celibacy we try to follow the example of Jesus and devote our time and energies to the doing of God's will and building God's reign on earth. One need not be celibate in order to accomplish this, of course, and most Christians have not chosen this path. However, Jesus who did not marry, invited some Christians to follow him in this way and praised those who were celibates "for the sake of God's reign".

However, the notion of a free choice of celibacy in order to pursue whole-heartedly a total submission to God's will is not totally foreign to Islam. Although Muhammad is seen following in the line of the married Jewish patriarchs like Abraham, Moses and David, the Qur'ân never criticizes the celibate state of Jesus and consistently shows respect for monks. The Qur'ân states the presence of "monks", or as we would say, "vowed religious", as one of the reasons why Christians are the closest community in friendship to Muslims. Many commentators have seen in the famous "Light Passage" (24, 35-38) an allusion to the desert monasteries which served as havens of hospitality, warmth and devotion to travellers.

Mary as a Model for All Believers: In some ways, it is Mary's virginity, in Qur'ânic terms, which makes our celibate choice most understandable to Muslims. The Qur'ân teaches that God set up Mary, whose body was chaste, as an example, a model, for those who believe. Whereas Jesus, according to the belief of Muslims, was a prophet - God's message and spirit, Mary is pictured as a devout or pious person - one who trusted in God's message, a saintly woman. God made Mary a model for "all believers", and we Christians who preserve our chastity as she did hers follow her example out of the same sense of devotion to God. Tirmîdhî's description of Mary's state of interior prayer is a good description of the life sought and followed by those of us in contemplative communities. The rest of us, who strive to be "contemplative in action", have the same ideal and purpose as Mary, in Tirmîdhî's words, "constantly seeking the glory of God and making every effort to persevere in it".

Celibate Life Is the Exception: In Islam, as in Christianity, it was always recognized that the celibate life was the exception, that the fundamental and usual way of practicing Islam (and Christianity) was the married state. The family, the home, the responsibility of raising God-fearing and upright children are values shared by Christians and Muslims which flow from God's command and blessing. Nevertheless, the history of Islam has offered outstanding examples of those who have foregone the state of married love, at the invitation of God, in order to do God's will in a pure and single-minded fashion.

Devotional Acts and Sexual Restraint: It should also be remembered that in Islam sexual restraint is an integral part of some of the principal devotional acts. The Ramadân fast is not only from eating and drinking, but also from all sexual activity, during the hours of the fast. The sacred period of ihrâm during the hajj also requires a complete, although admittedly temporary, celibacy. The point is that Muslims forego sexual activity during these sacred periods not because it is considered evil, demeaning, or unworthy, but because God has called them to refrain from that legitimate activity in order to turn their attention and their hearts fully to God.

Our Motivation is Obedience and Love of God: The Christian promise of celibacy is different, not in motivation, but in duration. Muslims have often asked me how it is possible to go through life without marrying; it is not an affront or an attack, but understandable curiosity inspired by a different religious tradition. "Isn't it very difficult?", they ask. I say that it is indeed difficult, but possible, with God's help, if your motivation is obedience and love for God who, we believe, has called us to this life. To a Christian, the idea of performing carefully the Ramadân fast seems extremely difficult, but good Muslims do it throughout their lives because God who has commanded the fast gives them the strength to obey.

The Witness of Our Lives: In summary, we can say that although Islam stresses the value and goodness of family life, there are elements within the Islamic faith itself which can help Muslims understand our promise of celibacy. To contentious individuals among them, our promise is unnatural and contrary to God's revelation. Many other Muslims are curious and sincerely interested to know about our commitment because of a natural Muslim inclination to "persons of God". For such persons, their deeper questions cannot be answered on a theoretical level; the witness of our lives speaks more truthfully than our words.

The Deepest Justification of Our Vow of Chastity: Many conscientious Muslims believe that Christians, especially Catholics, disparage sexuality and family life. They often feel that priests, sisters, and brothers are "lacking" something, afraid of our sexuality, fleeing from the problems of everyday life, living in an ivory tower. What determines whether these views are unfounded prejudices or sound criticisms is the kind of persons that we, with God's grace, have become. A warm, affectionate, happy, loving, serving, devout Christian religious man or woman is the only adequate answer to such sincere enquiries and ultimately the deepest justification of our vow of chastity.

Ref. Encounter, Pontificio Instituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamica Piazza S. Apollinare, 49 - 00186 Roma, Feb. 1987, No. 132, pp.1-17.
Full text available at SEDOS Documentation Centre.

The Apostolate of Presence is not Enough

Bob McCahill, M.M.

(A la suite de l'article de Thomas Michel, qui se situe dans un contexte islamique, voici une lettre du Père Robert McCahill, MM, qui travaille au Bangladesch depuis 1975. Il y parle de ses expériences avec des Musulmans sincères mais sceptiques, qui se demandent ce que le Père faisait parmi eux. Un Bengali lui a déclaré très franchement que sa présence parmi eux ne suffisait pas. Le Père décrit alors ce qu'il appelle son apostolat du témoignage.)

The phrase "the apostolate of presence" reminds me of some rather blunt advice that was given to me years ago by a sincere Muslim friend. "It is not enough for you to be present among us. You must be doing something for the poor. All Bengalis feel that way."

He went on to explain the reason that prompted his straightforward advice. "You are an Englishman. Maybe you've never been to England, but in the minds of my people you are a part of the people who conquered and used the Bengal. We think Englishmen abuse liquor, abuse women, and despise the poor. We have that image of them, an image born in our history and kept alive in the dramas that we are so fond of watching. You've got to consider these things if you want to live among Bengalis." He and other spiritually-oriented Muslims have valid historical reasons for the suspicion that I, too, come to lord it over them.

An Apostolate of Witness: How, then, would I summarize my own apostolate? It is, it seems to me, an apostolate of witness. I attempt to be a witness of the practical love of God for the poor, and a witness of the profound respect that Christianity has for other faiths. Witness of Christ is by way of cheerful service. I go out looking for the sick-poor in their homes and villages in order to serve them as would their own blood brothers, happily, without expectation of a reward.

Some of Them Begin to Wonder: Daily I am asked by curious, skeptical Muslims: "What are you doing here?" "What's in this for you?" I reply: "I am a Catholic Christian missionary. I am trying to live as Jesus did. Jesus went about doing

good and healing. Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve and to spend himself for others. Jesus gave us an example; we are to do for others as Jesus did for us."

Daily I am scrutinized by numerous spiritually-oriented persons, persons who have valid historical reasons for the suspicion that I too, came to lord it over them. What they see is an Englishman who cares not for liquor, treats women respectfully, and befriends the poor. What they hear is that the motive behind the service is solely Jesus and no other self-interested reason. After seeing and hearing that message over a long period of time some of them begin to wonder: Is it possible that Allah means for persons as different as Muslims and Christians to befriend, and not to conquer, one another? Is it possible that persons having vastly divergent faiths can be and behave as brothers and sisters?

The Extraordinary Impact of Celibacy: It is not overly difficult for Muslim Bengalis to get used to the idea that I abstain from liquor because most of them abstain, too, for a lifetime. Celibacy, however, is another matter. Any description of this apostolate would be incomplete without considering the extraordinary impact made by celibate witness upon Muslim Bangalis. The men of this country do not trust other men in dealing with "their" women. After a while, however, they understand and accept that I really have womens' welfare, and not sexual pleasure, on my mind. Trust grows. The men allow me to relate face to face with their wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters. In fact, there is no aspect of Christian witness that so inspires the Muslim Bengali as does celibacy. Celibacy which is lived and explained while maintaining affectionate relationships with women boggles their minds.

Spending Oneself for the Poor: My experience in Bangladesh since 1975 is precisely as my Muslim friend put it: Presence is not enough. However, a servant presence, spending oneself for the poor, holding oneself ever-ready to explain Christian behaviour to all who ask "why?", is, as I see things, an essential part of direct evangelization in Bangladesh.

Ref. Letter from Bangladesh, September 1987.

Religions, Ecology and Economics

Thomas Berry

(L'Article de Thomas Berry sur religion et écologie n'est pas seulement un nouveau rappel de notre qualité d'intendants des ressources naturelles de la terre qui appartiennent à tous. Il renverse complètement la vision chrétienne traditionnelle du monde et suggère que nous reconnaissons le monde de la nature, plutôt que celui de la Bible, comme la manifestation première du sacré. Une tâche qui nous incite à la réflexion!)

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The Christian Perspective: As far as Christians are concerned, only a transformed perspective can assist in achieving a viable economy, a viable planet or a viable humanity. Our present Christianity is over-committed to biblical revelation rather than the revelation of the natural world; to the salvific process rather than the creative process; to the human rather than the earth community as the norm of reality and value; to progress as increased human wellbeing rather than an advance in wellbeing of the entire life community; to a sense of the individual historical Christ of the synoptic gospels rather than the sense of Christ as a dimension of the entire order of the universe.

Natural World as Primary Manifestation of the Sacred: In this context I propose: that the natural world about us be recognized as the primary manifestation of the world of the sacred; that creation concerns have priority over salvific concerns; that the integral community of life, earth and the entire universe be accepted as our primary referent as regards reality and value; that our sense of progress be primarily concerned with progress in the purity and life-giving qualities of the air, the water and the soil, and that the habitat of every life form be accorded its due recognition as sacred and inviolable; that the Christian sense include the sense of Christ as a dimension of the universe, of the planet earth and of all living forms as well as a dimension of the human.

An Extended Moral Sense: Once these dimensions of the Christian tradition are activated, our sense of reality and value would extend our moral sense to include biocide (the killing of the life systems of the planet) and geocide (the devastation of the earth itself) with suicide, homicide and genocide.

A Complete Reversal of What is to be Considered Normative:

The supposition of religious persons is generally that the economic process and our understanding of functioning natural systems need to be brought into alignment with existing forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression. Such is the attitude adapted by the Catholic bishops in their recently developed statement on the U.S. economy. I am suggesting instead that both religion and economics need to establish the ecosystems of planet earth as normative for their own proper functioning. I am also suggesting that this situation is bringing about a new metareligious context, enabling Western Christian traditions to get beyond their aversions to what was once considered naturalism to a new intimacy with the earth.

Planetary Bankruptcy: I am also suggesting that our economic systems develop some awareness that our efforts to impose mechanistic controls on the biorhythms of the planet can only increase our economic difficulties. Inherently inflationary, our modern industrial processes are already collapsing under their own weight. The benefits are for the most part illusory, as can be seen in the current euphoria in the corporate world and in the rise of profits into the tens of billions of dollars annually. All this is based on purely fictional book-keeping that dares not enter the true cost of industrial operation in terms of the planetary bankruptcy, it is producing.

A Mutually Enforcing Relationship: At the ultimate level, nature will not be bargained with. In its ever-renewing processes, it is enormously prodigal in the nourishment it provides all living creatures. This abundance is available for humans so long as we are sensitive to the needs of other life systems as well as our own, and so long as we accept nature's rhythms as normative for our own. What is needed most of all today is the sustaining spiritual endurance to carry on the creative task before us everywhere on earth. In all countries, significant achievements can and do come about when spiritual orientation, a sense of ecological integrity, and economic functioning come together in mutually enhancing relationship.

In guiding the human community toward a mutually enhancing presence to the earth community, the traditional religions in their primary role offer a sense of the sacred dimensions of the natural world, aesthetic and emotional sensitivities, ritual integration of the human with the natural rhythms of the earth, and a way of dealing with the harsh and violent aspects of nature. Beyond all these there is the larger sense of intimacy with the earth - such that the human is seen not so much as a separate being but as a mode of being of the earth, as that being in whom the entire earth community reflects on and celebrates itself in conscious self-awareness. The earth and the human find themselves in each other.

Looking back over these traditions, we return first to the contribution of,:

The African Tradition: In this tradition spirit presences pervade nature. A most intimate sense of this is achieved in the numinous "presence in the forest" experienced by the Bushmen. The sacred presence of the human, divine and natural worlds to each other enabled in abundance of wildlife to flourish and a mutually sustaining relationship with the biosystems of the continent.

The Chinese Tradition: The Confucian sense of unity of the human with the entire universe offers an insight and an intimacy that has long intrigued the Western mentality. The teachings of Wang Yang-Ming are especially relevant here: after instructing his students in the relation of humans to the natural world, he tells them:

Everything from ruler, minister, husband, wife and friends, to mountains, rivers, heavenly and earthly spirits, birds, animals and plants, all should be truly loved in order to realize my humanity that forms a unity, and then my clear character will be completely manifested, and I will really form one body with Heaven, earth and the myriad things....This is what is meant by "fully developing one's nature." (W.T. deBary, Sources of Chinese Tradition, p.573.)

Here, the sense of the universe as a single community finds one of its clearest presentations - as in the statement of Mencius, the 4th century B.C. Confucian philosopher, that "all things are complete within us." Mencius also repeats an ancient definition of the human as sin, "the mind and heart of the universe." Obviously this is a spiritual contribution of inestimable value in establishing a sense of our functional role in the larger life community - the central issue for all future survival.

The Buddhist ideal has already contributed significantly to a new ecological stance through its sense of "living lightly upon the earth." Buddhist influence enabled Edward Schumacher to develop his idea of appropriate technology, supportive of humans without impoverishing the earth.

The Hindu Tradition: The Hindu world, with its sense of divine manifestation throughout the universe, offers an ecstatic immersion in nature. Its art, literature and religion are permeated with the presence of the human and the natural to each other. This we see in the Kangra miniature paintings, as well as in the grand sculpture of the Descent of the Ganges. That the lotus blossom should carry the central symbolism of Asia is enormously significant, as compared to the humanly contrived symbol of the cross.

The Japanese Tradition: The JAPANESE tradition of unmediated experience of natural phenomena, as expressed in the early poetry of the Manyoshu and later critically presented by Motoori Norinaga, establishes an enduring presence to the natural world. That this controlling force in Japanese consciousness could become reconciled to the imposition of recent obnoxious technologies is a measure of the power of the scientific-technological system to overwhelm any traditional society. Yet these earlier and long-enduring orientations of consciousness remain available as a basic appeal in shaping a more viable mode of economic life in Japan. This spiritual and practical lifestyle guidance is indicated by Ninomiya Sontoku (1787-1856):

We make the universe our scripture. In this scripture, daily repeated to us, lies the path of sincerity. We reject the views of those scholars who set aside this precious scripture of the universe and seek for the path in books. We should with our eyes wide open look at the scripture of the universe and there seek for the path of sincerity. Heaven is silent, and yet the seasons come and go, and all things produce their fruit; and by its unwritten scripture and unspoken teachings rice grows when it is sown and wheat bears ears when its seeds are scattered; relying upon the path of authenticity for the same unchanging reason, we should do our best to follow with our heart.

Western Tradition: These profoundly intuitive, aesthetic/emotional and spiritual orientations of the Asian world are equaled in Western tradition only in the period of Romanticism and Idealism at the end of the 18th and in the early 19th centuries—the period of Coleridge and Wordsworth, but also especially for the organicism of Goethe, the nature philosophy of Schelling, the landscape painters of France and England, and the Hudson River painters in America.

Also in America, these modes of human consciousness found philosophical expression in the transcendentalism of Emerson, the religious-spiritual context of the 19th century naturalists such as Thoreau and Muir, and the movement to set aside wilderness areas for permanent preservation. Out of this setting came a general philosophical background for American attachment to the natural world. Such aesthetic/emotional sensitivities have remained the dominant appeal for a large number of Americans, along with a sense of naturalistic spiritual values. We owe our present movements toward a viable natural world to these developments in America and to later scientific studies, more than to our Western religious traditions.

The Combined Efforts of All Peoples and Traditions:

We need above all to recognize that adaptation to our human role within the earth community is a comprehensive human historical task.

It requires the skills, the imaginative and emotional sensitivities, the intellectual insights and the religious sense of the sacred that are the combined effort all peoples and traditions.

Ref. Breakthrough, Fall'86/Winter'87 pp. 4-11.
Address: Global Educ. Assoc.; Suite 570, 475 Riverside Dr.
N.Y, N.Y.10115; USA. Full text available at SEDOS.

RECOMMENDED READING

We recommend two recent books on Mission To-day, one in Italian which we hope will be translated into English, the other published in German two years ago is already available in English.

I. MISSION THEOLOGY TODAY

1. Meo Elia. CRISTO FUORI LE MURA; QUALE MISSIONE PER LE CHIESE ITALIANE? Torino, Piero Garibaudi Editore, 1987. Pp.316. L.18,000. This book takes up the challenge of the Italian Church which aims at a profound renewal of the sense of Community in the 80's, - an impossible challenge without taking seriously into account the responsibility of the Church in Italy for mission. Fr. Elia, reflecting a work of the 30's, "France, pays de Mission" believes that Italy too has become a "terra di missione". In this attempt to analyse what mission is to-day he underlines the necessity for the Italian Church not only to give to but also to receive from, the Churches of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Church in Italy needs to go back to school and learn again what mission means to day for Christ is now seen to be and is "outside the Walls".

2. Karl Muller. MISSION THEOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION St. Augustin, Steyler Verlag - Wort and Work. Pp. 237, DM. 30.00. New situations, a deeper appreciation of world religions and the significance of cultures are having profound consequences for mission. Since Mission is increasingly recognised to be the concern of the whole Church Fr. Muller attempts to examine the consequences of the long controversial discussion on the theological foundation of mission, dialogue, development aid, justice and peace and respect for creation, the savific value of other religions, ecumenism. The book respects the value of past experiences while emphasizing the context of mission to-day.

II. LIBERATION THEOLOGY

We recommend also two Studies on LIBERATION THEOLOGY.

1. Albert Nolan, OP and Richard Broderick, MSC
THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA
Order of Preachers, Box 106, Hilton 3245, South Africa; 1987. Pp.118.

The first part of this short work contains the lectures given by Albert Nolan at the 1986 Catholic Theological Winter School conducted at a number of centres in Southern Africa. It was the seventeenth in the series and took place just after the State of Emer-

gency was declared in the Republic of South Africa on June 12, 1986. Fr. Nolan's lectures dealt with the context of a theology of liberation and its relevance to South Africa today and examined the relationship of a theology of liberation to the Bible, the Vatican, Social Analysis, Marxism and finally the by now famous Kairos Document. Each chapter includes a short account of the discussion which followed the lecture.

The second part deals with the methodology and the group activities conducted by Fr. Broderick at the sessions. These were largely based on the TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY MINISTRIES series produced by the LUMKO INSTITUTE, P.O. BOX 5058. DELMENVILLE 1403, R.OF S.A.

This is a very useful work for all those involved in the increasing discussion on liberation theology in African countries today.

2. Philip Berryman. LIBERATION THEOLOGY: THE ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT THE REVOLUTIONARY.

New York; Pantheon Books, 1987. Pp. 231. \$6.95.

Oscar Romero's last sermon, his murder the following day and his funeral are among the most important moments in Philip Berryman's life. The controversy around liberation theology, now largely ended as a result of the two documents issued by the Vatican (See SEDOS BULLETIN 1986/Nos 2, 4 and 5) is not a purely internal Church matter for Berryman. He quotes from the 1980 document blueprinting a new policy on Latin America, written by the Committee on Santa Fe, whose members were part of President Reagan's circle: "U.S. policy must begin to counter (not react against) liberation theology as it is utilized in Latin America by the 'Liberation theology' clergy". Berryman faces the problem of "taking sides", in the actual situations with which missionaries are more and more frequently confronted - a problem dealt with by Albert Nolan, O.P. in a pamphlet of similar name. By asking not, "What must I believe" but "What is to be done" the proponents of liberation theology constantly challenge us to examine the relationship between religious belief, politics and ideology.

III. PRO MUNDI VITA PUBLICATIONS

Recent PMV Bulletins which we have received and recommend:

Bulletin 109 (1987/No.2) THE IMPACT OF ISLAM. Islamic Resurgence and the Response of Third World Christians. Pp. 35.

Bulletin 110 (1987/No.3) LAITY IN THE FIELD: POLARITIES AND CONVERGENCES. Deals briefly with the laity in the Church in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

87/312

DOSSIER 1/1987. JAPAN: THE WORLD OF WORK. A brief history of the Japanese Labour Movement: human relations in business and Industry; Trade Unionism. Pp.24.

Dossier 1/1987 (Sic) CONSERVATIVE CATHOLICISM IN NORTH AMERICA: PRO LIFE ACTIVISM AND THE PURSUIT OF THE SACRED. Pp.30. Good background to the Moral Majority and the New Right.

Dossier 2/1987 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND ANCESTRAL LANDS: TWO CASE-STUDIES COMPARED. Based on two studies carried out by Mil Roekaerts of P.M.V., one in Kalimantan Barat (Indonesia), the other in Mindanao (Philippines). Pp.32.