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### IN THIS ISSUE:

David Barrett's Statistics on the State of Global Mission, 1988, highlights both the importance of evangelizing the urban world and the new resources available for global mission.

Starting with a practical example of inculturation, Sean Dwan shows that the impetus for inculturation comes from concern with an "out" group, commonly, but not necessarily the poor. Believing that inculturation is done in the parish rather than in a center for inculturation, Fr. Dwan examines the three types of evangelization that can take place in or from a parish.

A second reflection on the same theme is written by Fr. Thomas Kwan, a diocesan priest from Hong Kong who examines the goal of inculturation. He reminds us that Jesus is not a Roman God, a Chinese Emmanuel, an African Messiah or a Latin American Liberator and challenges us to discover the Christian specificity of the gospel message.

Mission today is seen as mutual collaboration among local Churches. Thus, Michael Amaladoss, SJ, questions whether we should still speak about "foreign missionaries".

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Whether you agree with him or not, Protestant theologian, John Hick, argues his points well when examining the claim of Christianity to superiority in relation to other religions. His thought-provoking comparison of holiness and social transformation as it is actually lived in different religious traditions such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity puts the claims of Christianity in much-needed perspective.

Perhaps nothing has posed a greater challenge to the RSCJ Society's understanding and practice of education than "the option for the poor" -a stance taken by their congregation in the 1970's. In so far as the Society's mission continues to be lived out through institutions, it is because of their potential to participate in the radical reshaping of society. We have excerpted parts of the 89 page report which might prove of interest to other institutes engaged in education.

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#### DANS CE NUMERO

Les statistiques de David Barrett sur l'Etat de la Mission Mondiale, de 1988, mettent en relief, à la fois, l'importance de l'évangélisation du monde des villes que les nouvelles possibilités d'une mission mondiale.

A partir d'un exemple concret d'inculturation, Sean Dwan nous montre que l'impulsion vers l'inculturation est donné généralement par l'intérêt porté à un groupe marginalisé, mais pas nécessairement les pauvres. Il pense que l'inculturation se fait dans le cadre de la paroisse plutôt que dans des centres spécialisés et examine trois types d'évangélisation qui peuvent être organisés dans la paroisse ou à partir d'elle.

Le P. Thomas Kwan, prêtre diocésain de Hong Kong, nous présente une autre réflexion sur le même thème, en examinant le but de l'inculturation. Il nous rappelle que Jésus n'est ni un dieu romain, ni un Emmanuel chinois, ni un messie africain, ni un libérateur latino-américain. Et il nous incite à découvrir la spécificité chrétienne du message de l'Évangile.

Aujourd'hui la Mission est considérée comme une collaboration mutuelle entre Eglises locales. Le P. Michael Amaladoss SJ, se demande si nous devons encore parler de "missionnaires étrangers".

Que nous soyons d'accord ou non avec lui, on est frappé par les arguments développés par le théologien protestant, John Hick, lorsqu'il examine la revendication du Christianisme de sa supériorité sur les autres religions. On est poussé à réfléchir sur la sainteté et les transformations sociales vécues actuellement dans différentes traditions religieuses telles que l'Islam, l'Hindouisme, le Bouddisme et le Christianisme. Cela pourrait beaucoup nous aider à relativiser cette conscience de supériorité.

Dans les années 70, la Société des Religieuses du Sacré Coeur (RSCJ) a fait option pour les pauvres. Quel sens faut-il donner à cette option, quels moyens faut-il choisir, tout en continuant leur mission dans le cadre des Institutions et des oeuvres d'éducation: voilà le plus grand défi auquel ils ont à faire face. Ces institutions et ces oeuvres continuent parce qu' on les considère capables de contribuer à une transformation radicale de la société. Est-ce vrai ou non? Tel est le défi auquel la Société et ses institutions sont confrontés.

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## NEWS AND NOTICES:

GENERAL CHAPTER: We send our prayers and good wishes to the OFM-CAP (Frati Minori Cappuccini) who are now holding their General Chapter at Collegio San Lorenzo.

BISHOP CASALDALIGA: On the 23rd of June, SEDOS organized a meeting for members with Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga from Brazil. The Bishop has been a member of the Bishops Conference Commission on the Land. He spoke on the Preferential Option for the Poor and its Implications.

LAUNCHING THE DECADE: The World Council of Churches has launched an Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1989). The Decade is "a sign of growing awareness and responsibility within the ecumenical movement" to promote a "longterm framework for actions in solidarity with women". The churches' Decade is to target the situation of women within and outside the churches. Resource materials, worship and liturgy guides are available. Decade Link is a regular periodical especially created for information-sharing. We recommend SEDOS readers avail themselves of these resources and be an active participant in the Decade.

WE WISH ALL OUR READERS HAPPY SUMMER HOLIDAYS

The next issue of SEDOS Bulletin will appear on Sept. 15

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## STATUS OF GLOBAL MISSION, 1988

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David B. Barrett.

### A CRISIS IN PLANNING

The table starts with a section "World Population" and ends with a section "World Evangelization". This is symbolic. The whole purpose of the intervening sections on the church's membership and its multifold ministries is outreach - to reach out to serve the entire world. But something has gone wrong. Symbolizing this is the fact that 99.9 percent of all Christians' income is spent on themselves, including 2.9 percent on the Christian world around them at home. Only 0.1 percent goes on outreach abroad (foreign missions), and under one-tenth of this goes on outreach to the unreached non-Christian world.

It is not that Christians are not planning. There is a multiplicity of planning going on. This can be illustrated by two current massive megatrends. Since 1948, there has been a vast mushrooming of 5,300 significant congresses or conferences - Catholic, Protestant, Ecumenical, Evangelical, Charismatic - dealing with evangelization at national, regional, continental, or global levels.

With this vast proliferation of planning, and with such massive resources of personnel and finance available, one would have expected the total of persons who have never heard the good news of Jesus Christ to fall dramatically each year from 1900 to 1988. But this is not happening.

### EVANGELIZING THE URBAN WORLD

To understand the present poverty of strategy, we can focus on the world's 3,300 metropolises today (line 7), of which 307 are megacities (line 8). Of these metropolises, 1,500 are predominantly non-Christian. In 600 of these metropolises less than 5 percent of their populations are members of Christian churches. Three hundred are Islamic urban centers.

Urban ministry has therefore moved to center stage in recent years. Each year some 1,300 metropolises hold citywide evangelistic campaigns. Hundreds of mission agencies have recently begun urban mission programs abroad, all hinging on their major traditional resource - residential foreign missionaries.

The problem is that 99 percent of all this activity takes place in cities that have already been heavily evangelized before. These campaigns are possible only in relatively friendly cities. Non-Christian or anti-Christian megacities do not tolerate evangelism, or planning, or conferences on mission, or residential foreign missionaries.

### SOME STARTLING NEW RESOURCES

Existing resources for global mission are massive enough: 4 million full-time Christian workers with church and agency budgets totaling 145 billion U.S. dollars per year. But we are now discovering the existence of a number of massive new resources of unexpected magnitude. Two brief examples must suffice here.

First are intellectual resources. Each year, some 10,000 new books and articles on mission and evangelization are published, involving seventy or so major languages. Second are spiritual renewal resources.

Ref. International Bulletin of Missionary Research,  
Vol. 12, No. 1. January, 1988. Pp. 16-17.

## STATUS OF GLOBAL MISSION, 1988, IN CONTEXT OF 20TH CENTURY

Year:	1900	1970	1980	1988	2000
<b>WORLD POPULATION</b>					
1. Total population	1,619,886,800	3,610,034,400	4,373,917,500	5,104,522,300	6,259,642,000
2. Urban dwellers	232,694,900	1,354,237,000	1,797,479,000	2,265,263,900	3,160,381,900
3. Rural dwellers	1,387,191,900	2,255,797,400	2,576,438,500	2,839,258,300	3,099,260,100
4. Adult population	1,025,938,000	2,245,227,300	2,698,396,900	3,131,169,600	3,808,564,300
5. Literates	286,705,000	1,437,761,900	1,774,002,700	2,111,272,600	2,697,595,100
6. Nonliterates	739,233,000	807,465,400	924,394,200	1,019,897,000	1,110,969,200
<b>WORLDWIDE EXPANSION OF CITIES</b>					
7. Metropolises (over 100,000 population)	400	2,400	2,700	3,300	4,200
8. Megacities (over 1 million population)	20	161	227	307	433
<b>WORLD POPULATION BY RELIGION</b>					
9. Christians (total all kinds)	558,056,300	1,216,579,400	1,432,686,500	1,684,533,500	2,130,000,000
10. Muslims	200,102,200	550,919,000	722,956,500	881,680,000	1,200,653,000
11. Nonreligious	2,923,300	543,065,300	715,901,400	835,335,600	1,021,888,400
12. Hindus	203,033,300	465,784,800	582,749,900	674,564,600	859,252,300
13. Buddhists	127,159,000	231,672,200	273,715,600	316,201,000	359,092,100
14. Atheists	225,600	165,288,500	195,119,400	227,228,700	262,447,600
15. New-Religionists	5,910,000	76,443,100	96,021,800	113,454,200	138,263,800
16. Tribal religionists	106,339,600	88,077,400	89,963,500	99,201,600	100,535,900
17. Jews	12,269,800	15,185,900	16,938,200	18,429,100	20,173,600
18. Sikhs	2,960,600	10,612,200	14,244,400	17,017,000	23,831,700
19. Other religionists	400,907,100	246,406,600	233,620,300	236,876,300	143,503,600
<b>GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY</b>					
20. Total Christians as % of world	34.4	33.7	32.8	33.0	34.0
21. Affiliated church members	521,563,200	1,131,809,600	1,323,389,700	1,555,199,600	1,967,000,000
22. Practicing Christians	469,259,800	884,021,800	1,018,355,300	1,176,352,800	1,377,000,000
23. Pentecostals/Charismatics	3,700,000	72,600,000	158,000,000	332,000,000	562,000,000
24. Crypto-Christians	3,572,400	55,699,700	70,395,000	126,500,000	176,208,000
25. Average Christian martyrs per year	35,600	230,000	270,000	310,000	500,000
<b>MEMBERSHIP BY ECCLESIASTICAL BLOC</b>					
26. Anglicans	30,573,700	47,557,000	49,804,000	52,376,800	61,037,200
27. Catholics (non-Roman)	276,000	3,134,400	3,439,400	3,720,600	4,334,100
28. Marginal Protestants	927,600	10,830,200	14,077,500	17,109,000	24,106,200
29. Nonwhite indigenous Christians	7,743,100	58,702,000	82,181,100	131,768,300	204,100,000
30. Orthodox	115,897,700	143,402,500	160,737,900	175,456,800	199,819,000
31. Protestants	103,056,700	233,424,200	262,157,600	311,888,200	386,000,000
32. Roman Catholics	266,419,400	672,319,100	802,660,000	926,359,100	1,144,000,000
<b>MEMBERSHIP BY CONTINENT</b>					
33. Africa	8,756,400	115,924,200	164,571,000	212,481,200	323,914,900
34. East Asia	1,763,000	10,050,200	16,149,600	75,747,100	128,000,000
35. Europe	273,788,400	397,108,700	403,177,600	407,781,600	411,448,700
36. Latin America	60,025,100	262,027,800	340,978,600	413,842,300	555,486,000
37. Northern America	59,569,700	169,246,900	178,892,500	187,099,600	201,265,200
38. Oceania	4,311,400	14,669,400	16,160,600	17,548,300	21,361,500
39. South Asia	16,347,200	76,770,200	106,733,200	134,715,900	185,476,700
40. USSR	97,002,000	86,012,330	96,726,500	105,517,600	118,101,000
<b>CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS</b>					
41. Service agencies	1,500	14,100	17,500	20,410	24,000
42. Foreign-mission sending agencies	600	2,200	3,100	3,800	4,800
43. Institutions	9,500	80,500	91,000	98,400	103,000
<b>CHRISTIAN WORKERS</b>					
44. Nationals (all denominations)	1,050,000	2,350,000	2,950,000	3,807,600	4,500,000
45. Pentecostal/Charismatic national workers	2,000	237,300	420,000	857,000	1,100,000
46. Aliens (foreign missionaries)	62,000	240,000	249,000	262,300	400,000
47. Pentecostal/Charismatic foreign missionaries	100	3,790	34,600	74,000	167,000
<b>CHRISTIAN FINANCE (in U.S. \$, per year)</b>					
48. Personal income of church members	270 billion	4,100 billion	5,878 billion	8,201 billion	12,700 billion
49. Personal income of Pentecostals/Charismatics	250,000,000	157 billion	395 billion	680 billion	1,550 billion
50. Giving to Christian causes	8 billion	70 billion	100.3 billion	145 billion	220 billion
51. Churches' income	7 billion	50 billion	64.5 billion	80 billion	100 billion
52. Parachurch and institutional income	1 billion	20 billion	35.8 billion	65 billion	120 billion
53. Ecclesiastical crime	300,000	5,000,000	30,000,000	650,000,000	2 billion
54. Income of global foreign missions	200,000,000	3.0 billion	5.0 billion	8.0 billion	12 billion
55. Computers in Christian use	0	1,000	3,000,000	35,500,000	340,000,000
<b>CHRISTIAN LITERATURE</b>					
56. New commercial book titles per year	2,200	17,100	18,800	21,900	25,000
57. New titles including devotional	3,100	52,000	60,000	63,800	75,000
58. Christian periodicals	3,500	23,000	22,500	21,600	35,000
59. New books/articles on evangelization per year	300	3,100	7,500	10,000	16,000
<b>SCRIPTURE DISTRIBUTION (all sources)</b>					
60. Bibles per year	5,452,600	25,000,000	36,800,000	47,692,000	70,000,000
61. New Testaments per year	7,300,000	45,000,000	57,500,000	70,239,000	110,000,000
<b>CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING</b>					
62. Christian radio/TV stations	0	1,230	1,450	1,800	4,000
63. Total monthly listeners/viewers	0	750,000,000	990,474,400	1,213,544,800	2,150,000,000
64. for Christian stations	0	150,000,000	291,810,500	422,231,300	600,000,000
65. for secular stations	0	650,000,000	834,068,900	1,024,716,800	1,810,000,000
<b>CHRISTIAN URBAN MISSION</b>					
66. Non-Christian megacities	5	65	95	140	202
67. New non-Christian urban dwellers per day	5,200	51,100	69,300	90,500	140,000
68. Urban Christians	159,600,000	660,800,000	844,600,000	1,034,916,400	1,393,700,000
69. Urban Christians as % of urban dwellers	68.8	47.8	46.3	45.9	44.5
70. Evangelized urban dwellers, %	72.0	80.0	83.0	87.3	91.0
<b>WORLD EVANGELIZATION</b>					
71. Unevangelized populations	788,159,000	1,391,956,000	1,380,576,000	1,295,304,700	1,038,819,000
72. Unevangelized as % of world	48.7	38.6	31.6	25.8	16.6
73. Unreached peoples (with no churches)	3,500	1,300	700	500	200
74. World evangelization plans since A.D. 30	230	440	530	680	950

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**TAKING THE EXOTIC  
OUT OF  
INCULTURATION**

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Sean Dwan, S.S.C.

Inculturation deals with the relationship between the gospel and culture, or between the Church and the world. The following report from a Korean Sister provides a cameo of the dialectic which is involved at the practical level of inculturating:

"In preparing the crib this past Christmas I thought it would be appropriate to give it a Korean look. I designed it like the traditional thatched cottage but when I put the baby Jesus in it I thought he looked too cosy. This disappointed me because one of the reasons which prompted me to try something new was that the usual manger scenes give a snug, relaxed camp-fire feeling. In the process of trying to modify the crib to reflect the true situation of Jesus and Mary, I realized that a thatched cottage is a romantic image of Korea - Korea fifty years ago, perhaps, but not the Korea of the 1980's.

I finally came up with a design which had tall hotels, apartment buildings, and office blocks - with all the glittery advertising for cabarets, health clubs, and bars. This provided the background for a small shack made of a few planks and cardboard. This was Jesus's crib. Actually I had in mind the plight of the people evicted from their homes in Sanggye-dong. This, rather than the thatched cottage, is the present reality of Korea and seems a more believable setting for an encounter with our Savior.

People stood in front of it as if studying it, but not many passed any comments to me about it. One person, however, complained that it was not as pretty as other years, but this only seemed to prove my point."

Challenged by the Gospel. This is a short story of a very personal struggle. On the one hand Sister thought she knew what a typical Korean house was like (the post-card variety) until she allowed herself to be challenged by the gospel; and on the other hand, she assumed she knew what the Incarnation was all about (wasn't it pictured in the traditional Christmas cribs?) until she tried to relate that to the plight of Seoul's evicted families. This dialectic produced a deeper understanding of the meaning of Jesus's birth, and also greater insight into the true Korean situation.

Knowing Christianity too Well? We face a professional hazard of assuming that we have the gospel pretty well nailed down, that we don't have much more to find out about God, the Incarnation, the death and resurrection of Christ. We may be like the marketers of Coca Cola; we have a good product, and now what we need is a strategy to sell it. It is at this stage that we believe that a

thorough knowledge of cultural patterns would come in handy, much like the soft-drink company's research into taste preferences. However, no amount of knowledge of a culture will of itself generate an inculturated gospel. The difficult part of inculturation is not the difficulty of finding the time and having the ability to find out about local customs and cultural patterns, but it is having a personal experience of God which one really wants to share.

Knowledge of the Culture is Not Enough: If we assume that knowledge of culture alone (that is, without the dimension of encounter with God/mystery/transcendence) is enough preparation for inculturating the gospel, then our efforts are sure to be marred by the shallowness and gimmicky glitter of a sermon by "Fr. Trendy" who tries to be relevant to the young people by a shift of language but without anything to say.

### INCULTURATION AND MAJOR THEOLOGICAL THEMES

By seeing the close relationship between inculturation and such major theological themes as a) incarnation, b) evangelization, and c) mission it will become clear that inculturation cannot be considered to be just a mere fad.

Incarnation: The incarnation is the first gesture of, and model for, all inculturation - the Word of God taking form in a concrete historical and geographical setting. As a test of how ready we are to take seriously this particular concreteness we might ask ourselves, as we watch the TV news about Israel, Lebanon or Syria, how often does it cross our minds that Jesus probably looked like one of these guys; or are we more likely to have in our mind's eye a picture of Jesus (Hollywood?) which transcends his original historical and geographical setting?

If Jesus is the model for our inculturation attempts then it means that we: a) are confident that we can bring hope and meaning into the real lives (not just the religious lives) of the people; and b) we are not simply Koreano - Japano - or Sino - philes in an ultra-nationalistic sense but are sufficiently committed to the tradition to be able to confront the status quo. It is a misunderstanding of inculturation to suggest that we must like everything about a particular culture. Jesus's example is one of criticizing the tradition from the perspective of the tradition itself. But we must remember that he spoke very little about religion or culture, but about ordinary life. He probably would not devote all of a Sunday homily to preaching on the Month of Mary while student and industrial unrest are swirling about us!

Evangelization: There are, it seems to me, three kinds of evangelization that can be taking place in (from?) a parish. One is routine evangelization where expansion takes place, slowly or briskly, due to a well-operating parish machine. In such a case, a catechumen is given a systematic introduction to a new body of doctrine, and there is little effort to reflect on or integrate prior experiences of prayer or God. The result is that quite often there is very little metanoia or transformation.

Internal evangelization strives to inculcate in the catechumen confidence about being saved or at least chosen. Here the emphasis is on a personal, individual realization of a truth which produces peace of mind. The third kind of evangelization might be called communal evangelization. Here the church (parish), as a community, is not insulated from the culture but lives in it, actively striving to produce a more just and loving society. Clearly the issue of inculturation is more prominent in the third form, but it must be the basis for the other two if they are not to be escapist.

Mission: Following quite naturally from that third kind of evangelization is the topic of mission. Our understanding of mission is greatly clarified when we recall that the notion of the Reign of God is greater than the Church, and that a pastor's task is not to serve Christians but to inspire Christian communities to serve the world by mediating transcendence (pointing to the presence of God). This helps to put in their proper perspective questions like: Is Korea still a mission country? Are those priests and religious who are engaged in special apostolates more missionary than those in parishes?

A missionary tries, in the words of the Bell telephone advertisement, to 'reach out and touch someone', some person or some group which is alienated from the structures. Almost by definition, the impetus for inculturation comes from concern with some 'out' group, commonly, but not necessarily, the poor. As a simple example, the normal Church liturgy assumes that people have the weekend off. A priest concerned with factory workers is forced to ask himself: What do I really want to do for/with them? Do I just want to help them to 'get in' Mass at some other time? Is (as we routinely presume) Sunday Mass the touchstone of faith commitment? Concern with any 'out' group - ranging from an Alcoholics Anonymous club to women or the third world - will provoke the above kind of reflection which is the beginning of inculturation.

#### ALREADY DOING INCULTURATION?

Inculturation in the Parish: In Korea, Japan and Taiwan, our contribution to inculturation will be found in the parish rather than in some center for inculturation. A self test of the degree to which we have been inculturation-minded is applied not by asking ourselves how much study we have done on the local culture but by asking ourselves how often we have tried to make some event or occasion truly meaningful for the people we encounter - and for ourselves.

Creative Religious Response: How often do we manage to step outside of the routine performance? The Mass is the central celebration of our faith, and its dramatic potential is attested to by the use made of it by various composers. But for many priests and Catholics it has been a cop-out; its easy availability has relieved us of the burden of having to make a creative religious response to a particular situation. Whether it be a marriage, graduation, an anniversary, human rights day, an eviction protest, a fatal accident - the routine response is to have a Mass.

If we are really involved with, and concerned for the people for whom we have been asked to say/do something hopeful and meaningful (show

the presence of God) we will naturally want to use the symbols and gestures which they will find most meaningful. It is this particular, concrete search rather than 'uncommitted' reading of folklore books which is the true beginning of inculturation.

Mutual Search for Meaning: Because liturgy is so visible it is the obvious place to think about inculturation, but more basic than this is having the vocabulary 'to know how to go on', that is, to be able to continue a dialogue with the concerned persons in a mutual search for meaning. Knowing the local vocabulary about death, for example, enables us to interact meaningfully with the bereaved. But such a vocabulary knowledge is not intended to produce a blueprint which will enable us to deal 'routinely' with death.

Setting Priorities: Thinking through inculturation may help us deal with a phenomenon which is becoming more common in certain parts - missionary burnout. With the work load grown to unmanageable proportions many leave for home vacation in a state of near-exhaustion. Not only are we programmed never to say no, but we have never thought it necessary to prioritize the work that has to be done. To be only responding to every request that comes up in a parish is to have the tail wagging the dog. What, for example, is the reason why one might faithfully go into the Legion of Mary meeting to give the blessing at the end, but not attend the meeting itself? A missionary parish (where inculturating is a sine qua non) is one that reaches out to alienated groups. Of course not all alienated groups can be reached to the same degree; and it is here that the local situation combines with the interest of the parish leadership to give a parish its charism. There is no reason for all parishes to look alike; this is local church!

#### EVALUATING THE REACTION OF LOCAL CATHOLICS

How should we react when, after having tried to make something meaningful, and inculturate some aspect of the gospel, we hear negative comments such as: 'You don't understand our customs,' or 'This is not the Church I joined (or knew),' or 'I felt very uncomfortable,' or 'Why drag in bits from other religions into our Catholicism?' I suggest a checklist of six items:

1. We may lack confidence about what we are doing and this may lead us to give undue importance to the few critical voices, and to underestimate the positive comments and the silent majority.
2. New Catholics and ghetto Catholics may suffer from a kind of psycho-spiritual immaturity rendering them unable to distinguish the heart of the gospel message from the incidentals of the Catholic tradition. They may have made many personal sacrifices to be Catholic, and the incidentals (Latin liturgy, Gregorian chant, stained-glass windows, etc.) which we are modifying (in the name of inculturation) may be personal symbols of their original choice.
3. There are both conscious and unconscious levels of meaning to be considered... Christianity is often associated with modernity and upward mobility but in the midst of it all, Christians may (unconsciously)

yearn for the comfort and familiarity of the old religious practices while at the conscious level vigorously asserting that they have left them all behind.

4. Everyone wants to avoid the cross if at all possible, and negative criticism of inculturation may be a defense mechanism to side-step the demands of the cross.

5. Our understanding of inculturation may be wrong. We are not trying to put on an interesting show, or teach Koreans about their culture, or retrieve old Korean culture, but are trying to 'give an account of the hope which is in us' and represent (=present again) Jesus's death and resurrection in the ordinariness of ordinary life.

6. We may lack the creativity to do inculturation well. Items cannot be transferred willy-nilly from a Buddhist, Confucian or shamanistic context into a Christian setting on the basis of a passing impression about their functional similarity. Their original values must be understood and then be creatively adapted to their new setting. Here we can probably learn more from the architect than any other creative artist. The architect uses space, line, light and color to produce a sense of familiarity or continuity but the architect does not play with them to the extent that the usability of the building is adversely affected; the art must be useful! Likewise our use of line, light, space, color (be it in vestments, furnishings, gestures) should produce in the believing community a feeling of being 'at home' and not in some exotic, foreign setting. And it should be conducive to a gospel challenge rather than be so provocative as to be a permanent distraction.

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Ref. Columban Intercom,  
April, 1988, Vol. 10, No. 3, Pp. 65-71.

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## INCULTURATION: A CHINESE PERSPECTIVE

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Fr. Thomas Kwan

At the beginning of this century, one of the first noted Chinese Christian leaders, Cheng Jing-yi, proposed a two-step approach in developing a Christian Church truly at home in its Chinese environment.

Step 1: Western Christ - Western culture = the Essential Christ

Step 2: Essential Christ + Chinese culture = Chinese Christianity

Cheng believed that only a Chinese Christianity, deeply rooted both in continuity with the historical Church and in its own cultural reality, would be able to enter fully into Chinese life and effect the necessary widespread social regeneration. His view, though proposed several decades ago, still finds echoes at present with not a few who term such an approach the "inculturation" of Christianity.

While sharing his view on the possibility of a Chinese Christianity deeply rooted both in continuity with the historical (possibly universal) Church and in its own cultural reality, the author finds that what Cheng proposed as a two-step de-westernization is too idealistic and simplistic.

### THE MEANING OF INCULTURATION

The concept of inculturation is generally understood as the effort to adapt the Christian message to the way of thinking and acting (that is, to culture in the broad sense) of non-Occidental peoples, and in the case of China of course, to the way of thinking and acting of the Chinese people. Such a definition of inculturation is obviously neither comprehensive nor adequate.

Firstly, culture is not a self-enclosed system. If it were, it would be a dead one. A living culture is the living way of a people's thinking and acting, who while holding its age-long heritage and tradition, is capable of openness to other cultures. Only with this openness can a culture live on. Thus, culture is a changing reality, since it is continually faced with the "new". Culture must transform the heritage of the past by opening its future to the foreign influence which, from then on, is jointly responsible for the new destiny of the people.

Therefore, if inculturation simply means an eradication of the West and a putting on of Chinese, it runs the risk of isolating Christianity. In short, inculturation is more than just a vestment which one can take off or put on at random.

Secondly, whether we wish it to be true or not, if Christianity is the historical event of the incarnation of God in Jesus, by reason of the law of incarnation and its historical destiny, it is bound to the

West and it has been presented to the Chinese within this framework. It was therefore unavoidable that Christianity was offered to other cultures vested in its Western characteristics. By saying this, the author does not mean there is an inevitable identification between Christianity and Western civilization, or that we have to accept the Christianity handed down by the West without discrimination. The statement simply means: the belief that it would be sufficient to divest Christianity of the elements borrowed from Western culture in order to find an Essential Christ, if not an illusion, runs the risk of denying Christianity's very essence.

### CHRISTIAN SPECIFICITY

Thus a possible starting point of inculturation lies, not in the abandonment of the Western experience, nor merely in the putting on of a Chinese particularity; rather, it lies in finding the "Christian specificity" which, "in its long run of history, has caused Western specificity (after the Judean specificity) and which in the actual phenomenon of the encounter of cultures, is called to evoke all specificities while directing them towards a common destiny. The essential Christ cannot be the result of the reduction of one culture or the addition of another; instead, it is the result of an open encounter, without prejudice, between various Christians from different cultures, so that a wholistic Christ may emerge. In fact, the Christian specificity is Christ Himself.

No one has ever seen Him. The revelation of God in Christ forbids any culture to set itself up as a norm or model, and thus to verify in Christ the idea of God which it has developed on the basis of its cosmology, anthropology or history. It is in Christ that cultures meet. Christ cannot be divided. He is not a Roman God, a Chinese Emmanuel, an African Messiah, or a Latin American Liberator. He is all these and more. In reality, He is beyond any culture and belongs to every culture.

Encounter With Christ: The living Christ, the "Christian specificity" lies in the personal and communal encounter with Christ, the Source of life. It does not matter how poor our knowledge of Christ is, or whether our knowledge of Him comes through a different culture. The important thing is this: once Christ is rediscovered in that intimate relationship with which all Christians are endowed, and is loved in our fellow men and women, He becomes the unifying source of all diversities, personal and cultural. Christ does not adapt to any culture, He penetrates every culture. In fact, the worst obstacle to inculturation is mere mental discussion and external adaptation without living faith.

It is clear, therefore, that, inculturation cannot be obtained from "without" but only from "within". In other words, the permanency of Christianity will stand or fall on the question of whether the Chinese have made Christian ideals part of their own thinking, whether the Chinese people feel that the Christian vision of life is relevant to their own needs, and whether the Christian world view has become part of a truly Chinese aspiration. The aim of inculturation is not so much to accommodate Christianity to the Chinese culture as to change this culture to conform to the demands of the Gospel.

Finally, following John Mary Waliggo of Uganda, we may describe inculturation as "the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation evermore understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulations of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought patterns of each people. It is the conviction that Christ and his Good News are ever dynamic and challenging to all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people. It is the continuous endeavor to make Christianity truly feel at home in the culture of each people."

### SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Harmonious Relationships: The message of Christ is a vast and inexhaustible resource of God's love and truth from which the communicator must select emphases most appropriate for Chinese culture. For example, harmonious social relationships which have been highly appreciated in China from the beginning may serve as a good starting point for the Gospel's doctrine of reconciliation.

A Need for the Christian Message: Within Chinese culture, there are areas where a specific need for the Christian message exists. Those areas which culture itself usually fails to reach may provide the ideal ground for encounters between Culture and Faith. Problems like suffering, evil, the meaninglessness of life, moral failure, human inadequacy, fate and the dread of death are questions which, from the very beginning the Chinese have tried to answer.

The Christian Idea of Sanctification: Chinese morality has the tendency to be an elite morality. Being highly dependent on one's own effort for self-cultivation requires a certain degree of personal maturity, so it happens that only a few and exceptional persons succeed in its objective of perfection, while ordinary people content themselves with a relatively low standard of morality. Efforts should be made to bridge such a gap by introducing the Christian idea of sanctification, which in practice consists in prayer, worship, good works and sacrament.

Suffering and Resurrection: Since its defeat in the Opium War of 1842, China has been undergoing a difficult and humiliating time for over a century. Political struggles, revolutions, colonization, the Japanese occupation, the Second World War, civil wars, the Communist regime, the Cultural Revolution, and so on, cause enormous pain as well as raised unanswered questions in most Chinese. Feelings of anxiety and calamity still hang heavily over almost all Chinese who feel concerned about the fate of their country. What an appropriate time to let the suffering Christ cast light on this people and let the mystery of His resurrection propose a definite perspective, a perspective which culture by itself fails to give!

Ref. "A Study of the Book of Changes, It's Influence on Chinese Morality and Its Possible Convergence with Christian Thinking", Doctoral Dissertation, Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, Rome, 1987, Pp. 152-158.

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## COLLABORATION IN MISSION

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Michael Amaladoss, S.J.

Both history and theology have brought about changes in the situation of the Church in the world. First of all, after centuries of evangelization, one can say that the Church, even if it is a tiny minority in some places, is now established everywhere.

Secondly, we are living in a post-colonial era. There is a real desire on the part of the local Church to become truly local, authentically incarnating the Gospel in the culture and context of its life. There is a feeling that in the past they have not been allowed to do so and that now they must be free to become their authentic selves, as Church. One even speaks of a 'moratorium' on mission, understood in the traditional sense. This is not simply misplaced nationalism, but a real desire to be oneself, before becoming capable of receiving and integrating in a creative way the riches that others have to offer.

A Desire to Work Together: But this desire of each people/culture for its identity notwithstanding, thanks to the ease and speed of communications, as well as to growing interdependence, especially economically and politically, there is a desire to work together. While economic collaboration, social influence, cultural enrichment and an international political order are taken for granted, I do not see any reason why collaboration at the religious level requires any elaborate justification. On the one hand, objections to such religious collaboration are often due to the suspicion that behind religion there may be an attempt at economic, political, social or cultural domination. In the light of history such suspicions may not be simply imaginary. On the other hand, religion, when it is relevant and prophetic, has its impact on the other spheres of life and, in periods of tension, the foreign collaborator does become vulnerable. The 'foreigner' has to learn to adjust to varying situations in the religious as in the other spheres of the life of the community.

International Collaboration: In the light of these changing situations I wonder whether we should still speak about the "overseas missionary". It may be more meaningful today to speak of international collaboration, or even of international apostolate. I hope it is clear that I am not objecting to people who hear the call of God - which may often take the form of the call of the other - to go out of their own culture and people to be at the service of another people and culture. Such cross-cultural service is even to be welcomed. I even wish that, besides being a West-East, North-South affair, it becomes also an East-West and South-North, i.e. a truly international affair.

### A CALL TO SERVE

The person who sets out to be at the service of another culture and people must be answering a call. Such a step cannot be merely the result of a spirit of adventure or the response to a personal need - much less

the fruit of a global strategy. The local Church is responsible for its mission; it assesses needs and opportunities, discerns movements of the Spirit, determines priorities. The foreign helper is there at the service of the local Church. The term 'local Church' is of course a generic term. It could be concretely a community, an institution, a local unit of a religious congregation, a diocese, a country, etc. I suppose there would be structures of coordination that link all these various elements of a local Church. But it is the local Church that specifies or particularises the 'mission' of the helper who has come from abroad. He or she may be working in an area where the Church community is not yet present. Still, given the contemporary cultural and political conditions, the local Church is responsible. This does not exclude coordination at regional or international levels. But such coordination does not bypass the local Church. This supposes on the part of the helper an attitude of humility and availability. In the context of today she or he might also need a particular aptitude or training for the special work that is asked of her or him. The era of 'general practitioners' may be over.

#### A CALL TO WITNESS

If mission today is seen as mutual collaboration among local Churches, then foreign helpers are not simply on their own. They are sent by their local Church. They carry the Gospel with them and witness to it, not in its abstract purity, but as interpreted, inculturated and lived by the people to whom they belong. They bring with them all the riches of one, concrete, historical incarnation of the Good News. They have a double role of mediation. First of all, it is their task to share with the people whom they are serving the riches that have shaped them. In order to do this effectively they will have to acculturate themselves to the local situation: learn the language, live with and like the people, share their struggles and their celebrations. The inculturation of the Good News is the task of the local Church in dialogue with the other local Churches, and thus grows towards the convergent unity of the catholic Church. In this intercultural dialogue these foreigners also have a prophetic role to challenge the local Church in areas in which it needs to grow, but in which it may tend to be blind for various reasons.

Mutual Enrichment: Foreign helpers have also a reverse responsibility to the local Church from which they come. They introduce to it the riches of the Gospel as incarnate in the local Church which they have come to serve. They are therefore a means of mutual enrichment among the local Churches. This view of foreign helpers supposes that they do not pretend to somehow get out of their 'skin', so to speak, and become a 'native', but keeping their identity, though acculturated in their life and work, they play the role of mediator. They are certainly closer to the Church which they are serving than to the Church from which they come. But they remain a precious link. Given the speed and frequency of modern communications this is an advantage that they must exploit to the full. They help the local Church to grow precisely by being the challenging other, but one who challenges not by confrontation, but in understanding and participation. In their own person they embody the rich integration of both cultures. They are some of the

of local Churches, an expression of their mutuality and co-responsibility in mission.

#### MUTUALITY

If this is the role of the 'foreign helper', then every local Church must be prepared to send out helpers to other local Churches as an expression of their concern for all the Churches. One is happy to hear the Bishops of Latin America declare:

"The time has come for Latin America to intensify works of mutual service between local Churches and to extend them beyond their own frontiers "ad gentes". True, we ourselves are in need of missionaries; but we must give from our own poverty. Besides, our Churches have something original and important to offer all: their sense of salvation and liberation, the richness of their people's religiosity, the experiences of the basic ecclesial communities, their flourishing diversity of ministries, and their hope and joy rooted in the faith."

If such mutuality is taken seriously, then one can say that one should not send, if one is not ready to receive. Whatever be the difficulties that may attend such an effort in practice, the principle at least must be clear. The practical difficulties may actually point to the one-sided or uni-directional manner in which 'overseas mission' is still seen by many.

The Church as a Communion: The identity and role of the 'overseas missionary', therefore, should not be explored in itself, but as one element in the ongoing dialogue between the local Churches that is an expression of the Church as a communion. Necessary structures of facilitation and of organization and coordination must develop and function within this context, if they wish to contribute, under the guidance of the Spirit and of the Church, to hastening the coming of the Reign of God.

Ref. Tripod, No. 44, April, 1988, Pp. 33-39  
"Holy Spirit Study Centre",  
6, Welfare Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong.

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## IS CHRISTIANITY SUPERIOR?

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John Hick

There has been, during the period since the first world war, a marked development in ways of conceiving Christianity's place within the total religious life of the world. To understand the development, we must go back for a moment to the medieval assumption - medieval, but continuing effectively until about the end of the nineteenth century - of a Christian monopoly of salvific truth and life. This was expressed in the doctrine 'extra ecclesiam nulla salus'. This exclusivist Roman doctrine had its equally emphatic Protestant equivalent in the conviction that outside Christianity there is no salvation, so that missionaries were sent out to save souls who must otherwise have forfeited eternal life. What has led many, perhaps most, thinking Christians during the last seventy or so years gradually to abandon this absolutist position?

Greater Knowledge of Other Religions: Perhaps the most important factor has been the modern explosion of knowledge among Christians in the West concerning the other great religious traditions of the world. Between the two world wars, and even more so since the second, ill-informed and hostile Western stereotypes of the other faith communities have increasingly been replaced by more accurate knowledge and more sympathetic understanding. The immense spiritual riches of Judaism and Islam, of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, of Confucianism and Taoism and African traditional religion, have become better known in the West and have tended to erode the plausibility of the old Christian exclusivism.

Realization of Exploitation and Oppression: A second factor has been the realization that Christian absolutism, in collaboration with the acquisitive and violent in human nature, has done much to poison the relationships between the Christian minority and the non-Christian majority of the world's population by justifying exploitation and oppression on a gigantic scale. The Christian superiority complex supported and sanctified the Western imperialistic exploitation of what today we call the Third World.

Endemic Anti-Semitism: As regards the Jews, there is a clear connection between fifteen or so centuries of the "absoluteness" of Christianity, with its corollary of the radical inferiority and perverseness of the Judaism it "superseded," and the consequent endemic anti-Semitism of Christian civilization, which has continued with undiminished virulence into and through our twentieth century. This connection has only become a matter of Christian consciousness - within very limited circles - since the mid-1950s. One of those responsible for bringing it to Christian awareness is Rosemary Ruether. She has also written about the long-standing destructive effects upon Christian women of the absoluteness claimed by the church's traditional patriarchal system of ideas.

Harmful Effects of all Religious Absolutism: It should be added at this point that the claims of other religions to absolute validity and to a consequent superiority have likewise sanctified violent aggression, exploitation, and intolerance. A worldwide and history-long study of the harmful effects of religious absolutism would draw material from almost every tradition - Christianity and Islam probably providing the greatest number of examples, and Buddhism perhaps the least. However, I am writing here as a Christian specifically about our Christian attitude to other religions, and accordingly I shall be concerned with Christian rather than with other forms of religious absolutism and claims of superiority.

Examination of the Facts: To refer to our twentieth-century awareness of the values of the other great world traditions and to our concomitant new awareness of the pernicious side of Christian absolutism in history, is not to tell the full story of the modern erosion of theological exclusivism. The move from Christian exclusivism to inclusivism to pluralism, although in one way seemingly so natural and inevitable, sets Christianity in a new and to some alarming light in which there can no longer be any a priori assumption of overall superiority. The Christian tradition is now seen as one of a plurality of contexts of salvation - contexts, within which the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to God or Reality centeredness is occurring. Accordingly, if it is now claimed that Christianity constitutes a more favorable setting for this transformation than the other traditions, this must be shown by historical evidence. Today we cannot help feeling that the question of superiority has to be posed as an empirical issue, to be settled (if indeed it can be settled) by examination of the facts. The observable facts - constituting the fruits of religious faith in human life - are bewildering in their variety and scope. However, two threads are available to guide us: we can look for both individual and social transformation.

#### INDIVIDUAL TRANSFORMATION

We find individual transformation in its most evident form in those who are recognized as the saints of the different traditions - granting that there are different patterns of sainthood, some pursuing the inner paths of prayer, contemplation, and meditation, and others the outer paths of social service and political action. But if we mean by a saint a person who is much further advanced than most of us in the transformation from self-centeredness to God-centeredness, to Reality-centeredness, then I venture the proposition that each of the great religious traditions seems, so far as we can tell, to promote this transformation in one form or another to about the same extent. Relating this to the traditional assumption of superiority, I am thus suggesting that we have no good grounds for maintaining that Christianity has produced or is producing more saints, in proportion to population, or a higher quality of saintliness, than any other of the great streams of religious life.

Gandhi: A challenging recent example is set by Gandhi, recognized by hundreds of millions in India as a Mahatma or great soul. Most of us have come to see in him a human being who, in response to the

claim of God on his life, realized the human moral and spiritual potential to a rare degree, inspiring many others to rise to a new level of effective self-giving love for others. Gandhi was a Hindu, and the name of God that was on his lips as he was struck down by an assassin's bullets in 1948 was not that of the Christian Heavenly Father or Holy Trinity but that of the Hindu Rama. But if human salvation, or liberation, has any concrete meaning for men and women in this world, it must include the kind of transformation of human existence seen in Gandhi and, in varying ways and degrees, in the saints of all the great traditions. But this transformation, with its further influence upon other individuals and through them, more remotely, upon societies, is manifestly not confined to the Christian areas of the world. There are persons who have in varying degrees given themselves to God, or to the ultimate Reality, within each of the great traditions.

Cannot Be Proved or Disproved: I recognize that this cannot be proved.

The reason why it cannot be proved or disproved - is that we do not at present command the conceptual precision or the exhaustive information necessary for objective comparative judgments. What I am proposing on this basis, as a Christian attempting both to survey the contemporary world and to look back down the long vistas of history, is that we are not in a position to assert a greater power in Christianity than in any of the other great world faiths to bring about the kind of transformation in human beings that we all desire.

### SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The thread of saintliness, then I suggest, does not lead us to the conclusion that Christianity is manifestly superior. The other thread to be followed is that of the social outworkings of the different faiths. Here much Christian thought starts from a firm assumption of manifest superiority and, when challenged, presents a picture of the relatively affluent, just, peaceful, enlightened, democratic, Northern hemisphere, owing its virtues to Christianity, in contrast to the relatively poor, unjust, violent, backward, and undemocratic Southern hemisphere, held back by its Non-Christian faiths. However, this picture has to be deconstructed on several levels. To begin on the surface, Buddhist-Shinto Japan is not poor or technologically backward, and several other non-Christian nations of the Pacific rim are also rapidly becoming major industrial powers. Muslim Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states are far from poverty-stricken; and Hindu India, which has recently produced a number of front-rank physicists, is also the largest democracy in the world. Social injustice is indeed endemic in varying degrees in all these countries; but it is, alas, endemic in virtually every country in the world, affluent as well as poverty-stricken, Western as well as Eastern, Christian as well as non-Christian.

Poverty and Injustice in Christian Countries: And on the other side of the same coin, there are very large Christian populations that are desperately poor - particularly in the southern half of the Americas and in the southern half of Africa; there are Christian countries, in Latin America and South

Africa, whose social structures are profoundly unjust and where the insignia of democracy are a mockery; there are Christian populations, in Ireland and in Lebanon, currently engaged in political violence; and others, in the United States and in most European countries, turning the earth's precious resources into weapons of destruction on an appalling scale. Again, the Amnesty International report Torture in the Eighties impartially cites as guilty of torture a number of Muslim countries (including Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), a number of Christian countries (including South Africa, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Peru), Hindu India, Buddhist Sri Lanka, and Jewish Israel.

However, it remains true that the Christian, post-Christian, and Marxist West constitutes the relatively affluent First and Second Worlds, whereas the non-Christian East and partly Christian South constitutes the generally poverty-stricken Third World; and also that our modern liberal ideals of political freedom and human equality have initially developed primarily in the West. And so we have to ask to what extent this affluence and these modern liberal ideals are gifts of the Christian religion and evidence of its moral and intellectual superiority.

#### AFFLUENCE

Modern Science and Technology: Western economic prosperity is the product of modern science and technology. It has been suggested by several authors that the birth of modern science required the intellectual environment of Christianity, with its belief in a rational creator producing an orderly and law-governed universe. And it seems clear that science needed for its birth and early growth the hospitality of a worldview that sees the cosmos as a system subject to universal laws. But all the great religious traditions in their different ways - those of Semitic and those of Indian origin - see the universe in this way. The Hindu and Buddhist cosmologies have indeed greater affinities than the traditional Christian cosmology with some major modern scientific theories. The ancient Hindu conception of the vast successive Kalpas, each leading to the conflagration of the universe and then its renewal, to go again through the same development, is close to one of the current scientific models of an endlessly expanding and contracting universe. The Buddhist emphasis upon incessant process in an interdependent flux of beginningless and endless change agrees well with the physicists' picture of the universe as a field of energy undergoing perpetual transformations.

Observation, Experimentation and Reason: But neither Hinduism, nor Buddhism, nor Christianity during the the first fifteen centuries of its history, in fact gave birth to modern science. And so we have to ask what other factor entered to enable the human mind to awaken from its long prescientific slumber. The answer seems to be the rebirth, in the European Renaissance and then in the Enlightenment, of the Greek spirit of free inquiry, gradually liberating minds from the thrall of unquestioned dogmas and enabling them to turn to observation, experimentation, and reason to understand

the universe in which we find ourselves. Once modern science had thus been launched, it quickly became an autonomous enterprise, of ever increasing power, obeying its own methodological rules and emphatically asserting its independence from the religious ethos within which it had been born.

Progressive Secularization: In the science versus religion debates of the nineteenth century, as in the church's earlier treatment of Galileo and its attempts to suppress the new cosmology, Christianity, far from seeing science as its own distinctive gift to the world, fought a long but unsuccessful battle against it! This led - despite a resurgence today of fundamentalist resistance - to a belated acceptance of the new scientific knowledge and a consequent massive rethinking of Christian doctrine. Thus Christianity can claim no proprietary interest in the modern scientific enterprise. Its special relationship consists simply in the fact that it was the first of the world faiths to be hit by the impact of the new empirical knowledge and outlook. But the same impact is now inevitably affecting the rest of the world. We may speculate that Islam will find this encounter as traumatic as has Christianity, whereas Hinduism and Buddhism may be able to adjust to it without great difficulty. But in each case the deeper effect must be, as in the Christian West, a progressive secularization both of thought and of society. And the deeper challenge will be to develop forms of faith through which the human spirit can be transformingly related to the Transcendent within the context of our modern knowledge of ourselves and of our environment.

Modern Explosion of Technology: Similar considerations apply to the modern explosion of technology, with its fruits of hitherto undreamed of material affluence. The firstness of the First World consists in its being the first part of the globe to have become industrialized and so to have benefited from the mass production of consumer goods. But it does not follow from this that the poor of the largely non-Christian Third World would not also like to have plentiful food and a large array of consumer goods! It is true that there is a strong strand of Hindu and Buddhist teaching that is world- and wealth-renouncing, treating the ever-changing material world as ultimately unreal. Hence the famous Hindu prayer, "lead me from the unreal to the Real." But it is also true that there is an equally strong strand of world-renouncing Christian teaching, virtually conflating "the world, the flesh, and the devil." This began in the New Testament, where Jesus tells his disciples "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you". Such teaching has not, however, prevented the development of Western capitalism and the general desire that it feeds for more and more possessions, including ever more sophisticated luxuries.

Industrial Revolution in India: Hindu teaching is no more likely to inhibit the scramble for consumer goods in a rapidly industrializing India. For the basis of India's relative poverty in the modern period - ancient India having been fully as prosperous as Europe - is the fact that its medieval phase has only now, in the second half of the twentieth century, given way to industrial revolution. And if we ask why Britain's eighteenth - and nineteenth

century industrial transformation did not spread to India, as it did to the United States and to other British dominions, the answer is that it was in Britain's interest to keep the Indian subcontinent a source of raw materials and a captive market rather than encourage it to become an independent industrial competitor.

As late as the 1920's, Gandhi was campaigning against Indians being compelled to export their raw cotton to Lancashire and then buy it back in the form of finished cloth, to the profit of the Lancashire mills and to the detriment of the Indian masses. It is only since independence in 1947 that India has begun to become industrialized on a large scale.

No Causal Connection: The general situation, then seems to be this. The wealth-creating industrial revolution, transforming human society from its feudal to its modern phase, occurred first in Europe, and was greatly helped by the concurrent European imperial expansion, which gave privileged access to raw materials and to vast new markets. The industrial process had to begin somewhere; and if it had not started when and where it did, it would have started at some other time or place. But it does not seem possible to establish any exclusive causal connection between industrialization and Christianity, such that without Christianity industrialization would not have occurred within human societies.

#### MODERN LIBERAL IDEALS

The other main area in which contemporary Christianity is inclined to see itself as superior is in its adoption of the modern liberal ideals of human equality and freedom, expressed politically in democratic forms of government. These liberal ideals emerged out of the deconstruction of the medieval dogmatic-hierarchical world of thought. That they are not purely Christian ideals, but the product of a creative interaction of cultural influences, is shown by the fact that for the previous thousand years the Christian West had been strongly hierarchical, sanctifying serfdom and the subjugation of women, believing not in the rights of humanity but in the divine right of kings, burning heretics and witches, and brutally suppressing both social unrest and deviant intellectual speculation. The dawning concepts of human rights and of individual freedom and equality were initially as powerfully opposed by the church as was modern science in its early days. For example, what became in the nineteenth century the Christian campaign against slavery began as a small minority movement within the churches, opposed by many churchmen acting on behalf of slave-owning interests. And the other endeavors by such groups as the Quakers, and then by the social gospel and Christian socialist movements, to achieve greater social justice within Western societies, have always been an uphill struggle, generally opposed by the ecclesiastical establishments. The belated and still often wavering conversion of the churches to the ideals of human equality and freedom is a very recent development, which is now also occurring within the other world traditions.

Transformed by Modernity: Once again, then, Christianity does not have a proprietary interest in these powerful secular ideals of the modern world. They have a secure theoretical basis in the

teachings of each of the great faiths, but in each case their emergence as a real force is largely due to the hierarchy-dissolving influences of modernity. Christianity has, however, the distinction - and herein lies its genuine historical uniqueness - of being the first of the world religions to have been to a great extent transformed by modernity.

The Effects of Modernity: The results in the Christian West have been partly beneficial and creative, and partly harmful and destructive. On the credit side, science has made possible ever more advanced technologies, which have in turn spawned an immense proliferation of wealth, so that the Western world now enjoys the highest material standard of living in history. This has at the same time stimulated an enormous growth and extension of education and an unprecedented explosion of cultural activity. On the debit side, the same expansion of scientific knowledge has produced ever more powerful weapons of mass destruction, so that the whole human enterprise now trembles under the threat of a massive nuclear exchange that could abruptly terminate civilization in the West and might produce a "nuclear winter," reducing the human race to scattered pockets of survivors facing a new stone age. Further, our modern affluence has been achieved at the expense of a galloping consumption of the earth's nonrenewable resources, and of a polarization between the over rich Northern and the desperately poor Southern hemispheres, while setting up in the affluent regions social and psychological stresses and strains with frightening levels of drug addiction, suicide, divorce, crime, urban violence, and a tragic sense of meaninglessness and general frustration.

#### A COMPLEX MIXTURE OF GOOD AND EVIL

When we try, then, to look at the religious traditions as long-lived historical entities we find in each case a complex mixture of valuable and harmful elements. Each has provided an effective framework of meaning for millions of adherents, carrying them through the different stages of life, affording consolation in sickness, need, and calamity, and enabling them to celebrate communally their times of health, well-being, and creativity. Within the ordered psychic space created by a living faith, as expressed in the institutions and customs of a society, millions of men and women in generation after generation have coped with life's pains and challenges and rejoiced in its blessings; and some have gone beyond ego-domination into a transforming relationship with the Eternal. Many have responded - again, in their varying degrees - to the moral claim of love/compassion mediated by the traditions and widely formulated as the Golden Rule: "Let not any one do unto another any act that one wisheth not done to oneself by others, knowing it to be painful to oneself" (the Hindu Mahabharata, Shanti parva, cclx.21); "Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you" (Confucius, Analects, Book XII,#2); "Hurt not others with that which pains yourself" (The Buddhist Udanavarga, v.18); "As ye would that others should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Jesus, Luke 6:31); "No one is a true believer unless that one desires for his/her brother or sister that which he/she desires for oneself" (The Muslim Hadith, Muslim, imam 71-2).

Sanctified Vicious Human Evils. This is the good side of the great traditions. But each has at the same time sanctified vicious human evils. Hinduism, though constituting an immensely rich and powerful universe of meaning, and pointing the way to inner liberation, also validates the hierarchical caste system of India, including the relegation of millions to the position of outcasts - an injustice which still lingers despite its official abolition in the 1947 Constitution. Hindu society tolerated the former practice of suttee and still tolerates the continuing cruel persecution and sometimes murder of brides whose dowry is deemed insufficient. Buddhism, although basically peaceful and tolerant, and suffusing millions with the ideal of unself-centered existence, has been indifferent until very recently to questions of social justice, so that many Buddhist lands have long remained in a state of feudal inequality. Islam, though calling the faithful to submission to and peace with God, and promoting a Muslim brotherhood that is notably free from color prejudice, has sanctioned "holy wars," fanatical intolerance, and the barbaric punishments of mutilation and flogging, and still generally consign women to a protected but narrowly confined life. Christianity, though providing in recent centuries a birthplace for modern science and a home for the modern liberal ideals of equality and freedom, has generated savage wars of religion and supported unnumberable "just wars", has tortured and burned multitudes of heretics and witches in the name of God, has motivated and authorized the persecution of the Jews, has validated systematic racism; and has tolerated the Western capitalist "rape of the earth," the misuse of nuclear energy, and the basic injustice of the North-South division into rich and poor nations.

Different Ways of being Human in Relation to the Eternal. The conclusion to be drawn seems to be that each tradition has constituted its own unique mixture of good and evil. Each is a long-lived social reality that has gone through times of flourishing and times of decline; and each is internally highly diverse, some of its aspects promoting human good and others damaging the human family. In face of these complexities it seems impossible to make the global judgment that any one religious tradition has contributed more good or less evil, or a more favorable balance of good and evil, than the others. It is of course possible that to the eye of omniscience, one tradition is in fact, on balance, superior to the rest. But to our partial and fallible human view they constitute different ways of being human in relation to the Eternal, each with both its cultural glories and its episodes of violent destructiveness, each raising vast populations to a higher moral and spiritual level and yet each at times functioning as a vehicle of human chauvinism, cupidity, and sadism. We may well judge that in some respects, or in some periods or regions, the fruits of one tradition are better than, whereas in other respects or periods or regions inferior to, those of another. But as vast complex totalities, the world traditions seem to be more or less on a par with each other. None can be singled out as manifestly superior.

If this is so, we may begin to consider how this truth is likely to affect the ongoing work of Christian theology.

## IMPACT ON THEOLOGY

### ATONEMENT

In the case of Christology, the kind of atonement thinking most hospitable to religious pluralism is nearest to what appears to have been the teaching of Jesus himself. Here we find, in the familiar words of the Lord's Prayer and in such parables as that of the prodigal son, the assumption of a direct relationship to God in which if we are truly penitent we can ask for and receive forgiveness and new life. The father in the parable did not require a blood sacrifice to appease his sense of justice: as soon as he saw his son returning he "had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him...(and said) 'for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found'" (Luke 15:20,24). And the only condition for God's forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer is that we also forgive one another.

This is far removed from the idea that God can forgive sinners only because Jesus has borne our just punishment by his death on the cross, or has somehow by that death satisfied the divine justice. A forgiveness that has to be bought by full payment of the moral debt is not in fact forgiveness at all. But Jesus did speak of the authentic miracle of forgiveness, a miracle not captured in the standard atonement theories. Their merit would seem to be that they offer one way of focusing attention upon Jesus' death as an expression of the self-giving love that was incarnate in his life. And in accordance with the contemporary Jewish belief that the death of a righteous martyr somehow worked for the good of Israel, Jesus himself may well have thought of his own approaching death as a source of blessing to many (cf. Mark 10:45) - as indeed it has proved to be through many different appropriations of it down the centuries.

Further Development: In the case of this doctrine and others then, the existing theological spectrum of the Christian tradition, as it has become diversified in the modern period, offers ample resources for theologies that can incorporate religious pluralism. What the pluralistic vision accordingly requires is not a radical departure from the diverse and ever-growing Christian tradition, but its further development in ways suggested by the discovery of God's presence and saving activity within other streams of human life.

Liberation and Feminism: At the same time two other major insights - which I have not had time even to attempt to treat here - are also calling for parallel developments. One is the realization, expressed in liberation theology, that God is at work wherever there is a costly commitment to the struggle for human justice, both outside and inside the church. Indeed too often dominant sections of the church have been and are today on the wrong side of the liberation struggles. Whereas Christian absolutism can easily blind one to that fact, the pluralist outlook enables us to recognize it and to participate in a worldwide movement for human liberation not restricted

within the borders of any one tradition.

The other new insight is that expressed in contemporary feminist theology: that God is the source of life and meaning for women as truly as for men, and that our religious understanding must accordingly be brought into a new balance. Openness to the wider religious life of humankind with its rich plurality of ways - female as well as male - of symbolizing the divine, can help to free us from the grip of an absolutized Christian patriarchalism.

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Ref. Hick, John and Knitter, Paul F. Eds.

THE MYTH OF CHRISTIAN UNIQUENESS:

Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions. 1987. Pp. 65-71.

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## A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS

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The CEBs are developing a whole new generation of leaders in Latin America. One author has noted:

These skills can be transferred, for the most part, to other spheres. Thus the ability to think on one's feet, to lead discussions, to take positions and defend them, to attempt community problem-solving, to act as advocates or mediators, or to administer larger social units than the family - all these are skills that can be applied directly in the political arena. The existence of such resources on a widespread basis means a new day is dawning for the church.

Ref. Edward Cleary, "CRISIS AND CHANGE."

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## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: POTENTIAL FOR TRANSFORMATION

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RSCJ International Education Commission.

(Nearly three years ago acting on clear mandates from their General Chapter, the International Education Commission of the Society of the Sacred Heart sought the participation of all RSCJ in an analysis of their experiences of the world today and an articulation of their particular call to service in the field of education.)

Educational institutions have always held an important place in the history of the Society. Today, we have a renewed sense of their potential to promote and reinforce certain values, to be instruments by which persons are either helped to become all that they can be, or blocked and malformed from their earliest years. Thus if the Society's mission continues to be lived out through institutions, it is not because we remain in them for historical reasons, but because we have a new appreciation of their potential to participate in the radical reshaping of society. It is precisely this appreciation which holds the challenge for us today.

### THE OPTION FOR THE POOR: A SPECIAL CALL

Perhaps nothing has posed a greater challenge to the Society's understanding and practice of education than "the option for the poor" formulated in 1970. It was not an accident of history, this option, nor a passing trend. It was linked inevitably with the Church's new self-understanding expressed in Vatican II; with the revolution in global consciousness brought about by new technologies; with the convergence of social and political liberation movements around the world.

For our society it grew out of an effort to be faithful to the Gospel in a very different world from that which we had known even a few years earlier.

We entered the world of the poor with our hearts as well as our heads, impelled by a call felt deeply as coming from God. The poor entered our world as never before. They have transformed us profoundly, even as we have sought to serve them and to make common cause with them. They have changed our reading of the Gospel, our understanding of the Church and of religious life, our whole scale of values.

The world of the poor is complex. It does not have a single face, nor does it speak with one voice. Many provinces speak of this complexity, describing what the experience has meant to them. The reports make clear that there is no way that the subject will not be raised if we speak of our educational mission.

Who are the Poor as We Know Them?

- \* They are the economically poor, the casualties of industrial development in rich countries as well as poor.
- \* They are those who have never had the opportunity to receive even a basic education or to acquire the skills that would lift them above subsistence level work.
- \* They are the "underclass" which threatens to become a permanent reality of big cities.
- \* They are those who have been impoverished by acts of patent injustice such as the stripping of their lands.
- \* They are the internal migrants of our countries and our continents, searching endlessly for work.
- \* They are immigrants and refugees, many without legal documents, the majority of them unwelcome and desperate strangers in every part of the world.
- \* They are the marginal or marginalized of all our countries. Often these are the oldest inhabitants, the indigenous peoples, forgotten, or remembered only to be exploited. Or they are other groups who have come to feel excluded from the mainstream: the elderly, the handicapped and the retarded.
- \* They are children in increasing and alarming numbers: not only the children of developing countries, but those who are falling into poverty in rich countries as well.
- \* They are the growing numbers of alienated youth, some of them citizens of the richest countries in the world, who are reaching adulthood with the prospect of endless unemployment before them.
- \* Finally, they are women, world-wide, awakening to their special status, their historical oppression, their poverty as a group, as well as their possibilities as bearers of life and peace.

The Pervasiveness of Poverty Today: All these poor are part of our collective life: each of these groups has had an impact on the Society in some part of the world. Part of the complexity of poverty today is its pervasiveness. Although its magnitude overwhelms in some regions, it is in fact confined to no continent or hemisphere, and it is absent from none. The world becomes poorer year by year: every global analysis confirms this fact, even if different reasons and solutions are put forward.

To the extent that the community or provinces lives the option for the poor, this fact is inescapable and profoundly disturbing. Provinces speak of their sense of helplessness, pain, being overwhelmed by the complexity and weight of the systems of injustice perceived as having such devastating effect on most of humankind, and on our closest neighbors. We have learned "in our flesh" that we cannot "do for others" from

a position of superiority. As we are with others in new ways, our action may be transformed from its depths.

Understanding Poverty, Marginalization and Exclusion: In face of this pervasiveness, we need to clarify the understanding we have reached of poverty, marginalization, exclusion from the goods of the earth. It is essential that we seek this clarity as a Society, gradually but persistently, for the sake of our educational mission, so that our resources may be well focused, and so that the search for justice may be truly linked with education, in renewed creativity.

Most provinces are far better able today than ten years ago to answer the question, "Who are the poor here?". We understand better the nature of poverty in each place, and its linkages across political and geographical boundaries. In places where we are truly among them, the poor themselves help us answer other questions, for example:

"Why does poverty exist?"

"What should we do?"

"What can we do, together?"

Theology of Education: New understandings, weighed and illumined in faith, shape a new vision of educational service. It is clearly not a matter of adapting the education of earlier times to a new clientele. We must rather seek out a philosophy of education, pedagogies, methodologies, that in their totality will constitute for us a "theology of education"...

\* rooted in the Gospel,

\* based on the conviction that the poor can and must be the agents of their own transformation.

Across the Society, we know the dangers of an educational "adaptation" that leaves basic injustices untouched. We still speak in many places about "formation of leaders", but we are more willing than we were before to question underlying assumptions about leadership itself, and its links with power and wealth on the one hand, service and sharing on the other. Fee structures trouble us. Where families are free to choose schools if they can pay for their children's education, we struggle to provide the financial help which assures a socio-economic mix (which often means a racial mix as well) in schools, to remove the remains of elitism. We realize how hard it is to design an education which corresponds justly and effectively to the needs of the poor, and how incapable we are of doing this alone.

#### WHAT CAN WE DO IN INSTITUTIONS?

We know that institutions are basic to society's functioning, but we are more alert to their dangers as well. Institutions permit the systematic pursuit of definite goals. And that is no small thing. But they are also always in danger of sclerosis, tempted to give more importance to the structures than to goals. It is important that we seek the model which is best adapted to the time and the actual situation, to the persons who are engaged in the work, and to achieving established goals.

The institutions we hope for today are made up of bonds of relationships between groups of various kinds which have a common value system and policies which allow the promotion of these values. Such institutions interact with the world at large, and are able to be called into question, from within or without, in view of changes in the reality which they are to serve. Members are expected to take real responsibility, and to be creative.

Problems and difficulties of various kinds arise everywhere in institutions. They should be a stimulant to greater creativity. We can:

Try to Make Institutional Practices More Just:

For example, administrative or financial difficulties motivate us to find new means to ensure justice:

- \* just salaries for the laity who work with us in our schools;
- \* accessibility to all social classes in fee-paying schools;
- \* transformation of the internal structures of the institution in ways that lead to solidarity, deeper communion.

Revise Programs: Work on Teacher Formation. This invites creativity:

\* in certain provinces we are involved with other educators on commissions for the elaboration of curricula, contributing to new educational orientations in our countries;

\* except in a few provinces, it would seem that we are hardly present in those places where teachers are trained. Why? Is it due to a lack of competent persons, or have we put our priorities elsewhere?;

\* it is of the utmost importance that we share in the creation of structures, methods, pedagogy, towards the educational vision that we see, working closely with others.

Educate for Leadership: Sometimes we are disappointed. We feel that we have not formed young people who are capable of influencing their milieu. Without giving up, we must search, if that is possible, for ways to form "leaders" who will become involved in groups, or movements which have an influence on the milieu, or on structures.

Ask Ourselves Challenging Questions: Every social system tries to influence the formation of the young. And we ourselves, are we really, everywhere, working:

\* to have a clearer consciousness of the final goals of the systems in which we are involved?

\* to seek to define more clearly ourselves the action which we also want to have on our world, through institutions of education?

\* to participate in the institutions where we are working, in an effort at transformation of the educational systems of the country?

\* to understand better to what extent we collaborate by our choices, in interest groups and in orientations of which we disapprove?

Educate in a Way that is Consistent with our Options:

We seek an education for more justice, solidarity and participation;

\* an education which takes into account, effectively, the world of the poor;

\* an education which permits the people themselves to take charge of their own formation.

We live in a world where the poor become poorer and the rich richer. In certain institutions of learning or universities, we are dealing with the privileged class, those privileged through wealth or through learning, or through power. How can we help these "privileged" young people to understand, in ways appropriate to their age, the underlying reasons for situations of advantage-disadvantage? How much are we willing to risk in this kind of analysis?

\* How can we build bridges between these two juxtaposed worlds, which are so different, recognizing that there is truth on both sides?

\* How can we develop a specific pedagogy so that the social classes which are more favored will commit themselves to the cause and interests of the poor, instead of remaining closed in their privileges?

There has been a consistent effort to broaden the social base of the student body, but how far has real integration gone? What questions make us uncomfortable and what questions push us to go farther?

If we are unable to leave an "aseptic neutrality", which is relatively untouched by the reality of our world, to really educate for justice in faith, the question of maintaining this apostolic work as an apostolate of the Society should be raised.

Define the Criteria: These criteria should be determined in light of the options of the Society. The evaluations done in institutions should make it possible to assess whether the objectives, general or particular, which were determined ahead of time, are being achieved, and are consistent with our priorities. It would be good to evaluate periodically our action as members of the Society in the institution; to evaluate:

\* the content of the teaching: in what measure each discipline contributes to a formation and an education which is according to Gospel values;

\* the pedagogical and educational methods; to study, for example, their coherence with our desire to solicit real participation;

\* the level of collaboration and thus of communion;

\* the picture of the world which is presented; the world view which is promoted;

\* the idea of God given by us or transmitted by education in faith.

Study to what extent the institution is ready to transform itself:

\* in order to adapt itself, as a living organism, not remaining closed in its "organization";

\* for an ever new openness to the changing context of the world;

\* to follow the calls of God, discerned in a community of faith, in following the choices already made by the Society and by the Church.

#### ASPECT WHICH CONCERN US

We feel ourselves educators with a strong call to collaborate with many others in the transformation of the unjust reality in which we are living and making our own specific contribution. The challenge is: How are we to do this?

We need to ask ourselves:

\* how far have we understood that our methods can produce a result that is the exact opposite of what we wish for?

\* have we dedicated our resources, time, and energy to developing methods which promote greater knowledge, or to seeking educational alternatives which will transform values, relationships, and structures at every level?

\* have we searched out the values, relationships, and structures which need to be transformed, or are we simply consolidating and reproducing the status quo?

\* are we striving for a personalized formation without a social dimension, or are we promoting educative processes which have an impact on our surroundings?

\* are we developing organizational capacities and solidarity?

\* have we chosen as a priority to nurture and to create conditions for participation, formation of leaders and multipliers?

\* can we, by ourselves, in the midst of such a complex world direct, coordinate, and evaluate the educative process that we are carrying out; or do we need expert help?

\* are we devoting our time and effort to developing an intellectual discipline which supports and furthers our search for the new answers that we seek and to which we feel called?

\* are we easily satisfied with what we are doing, or are we concerned to go deeper into things?

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Ref. Education: a Commitment. International Education Commission for the Society of the Sacred Heart, 1988, Pp. 30-35.





MARY . . .

MODEL OF RISK . . .  
MODEL OF OPENNESS . . .  
BE OUR GUIDE.

OPPRESSED WOMAN . . .  
LEAD US TO LIFE.

LIBERATOR OF THE  
OPPRESSED . . .

MARGINALIZED  
WOMAN . . .

POLITICAL REFUGEE . . .  
SEEKER OF SANCTUARY

FIRST DISCIPLE . . .  
SHARER IN  
CHRIST'S MINISTRY . . .

MOTHER OF A  
POLITICAL PRISONER

MOTHER OF THE  
CONDEMNED . . .

MOTHER OF THE  
EXECUTED CRIMINAL  
PRAY FOR US.

WOMAN OF MERCY . . .  
EMPOWER US.

WOMAN, OF VISION . . .  
WOMAN,  
PREGNANT WITH HOPE  
WOMAN,  
CENTERED IN GOD.

Litany of Mary  
Pax Christi USA.