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IN THIS ISSUE

In preparation for our November Seminar on Decision-making in Intercultural Communities we are including a fascinating and provocative introduction to the topic INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION. Many intercultural researchers agree that the most important part of communication takes place at the largely unconscious levels of gesture, facial expression, eye contact, tone of voice, the degree of emotional expressiveness etc. This part of the culture, known as Primary Level Culture defines what is meaningful information for people, and messages which do not fit into the logic of this schema are simply lost on them.

Researchers are entering the field of intercultural communities from a variety of cultural backgrounds and bring new interpretations and conceptions. Instead of the classic sender - message - receiver model of communication, they favour a convergence model in which new information is originating from all parties of a communication process. The process of exchange then moves towards mutual understanding.

The factors involved in the acceptance and welcoming of new members into an intercultural organization such as a religious institute are also examined. All this, we believe, has considerable relevance for the coming November SEDOS Seminar on decision making in inter cultural

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communities typical of SEDOS membership. It may have considerable relevance also for the failure in communicating the gospel message in Japan and other countries of Asia.

Continuing on the theme of culture, MONICA HELLWIG looks at five positive factors of the contemporary American ethos and believes that there can be a genuine reciprocity of influence between the Church and American culture. This paper has been considerably shortened for inclusion in SEDOS Bulletin. Aspects of the culture chosen by the author include the legal system, freedom of conscience, freedom of speech and assembly and the modern experience of democracy. Under these titles she discusses censorship of theological debate, legal procedural principles, the principle of subsidiarity and the discernment of the Christian faithful. All these are important today for missionaries working in cross cultural situations.

Is the Catholicism of the Churches in East Africa un-inculturated? While recognising the importance of orthodoxy and tradition LAURENTI MAGESA points out that if the local East African Churches seriously accept themselves as particular local Churches they need to go beyond a mere intellectual assent to nebulous doctrine or magisterial statements. If inculturation or incarnation of the faith is to be real in East Africa, he writes, it is necessary to examine the relationship between the local Churches there and the world-wide Catholic Communion and Rome. Examining this relationship he deals with the place of small Christian Communities in East Africa, ministry in the Church and the Church as Social Conscience in the present East African political situation.

In view of the coming African Synod we include a short piece on the history of Synods illustrated from the experience of the Church in France.

And there is an excerpt from MOSAIC - the new newsletter from the Multi-Faith Centre in its new home in Harborne, Birmingham.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

William E. Biernatzki, S.J. Editor

I. BEGINNINGS OF THE FIELD OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

For centuries explorers, missionaries and political envoys have been sending back descriptions of (for them) newly discovered tribes and nations with an eye to preparing their successors for better communication. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ethnographers began the systematic science of describing different 'ways of life' and created the concept of culture as well as the field of cultural anthropology. Increasingly anthropologists were called upon to apply their knowledge to the training of colonial administrators and missionaries. In the 1950s anthropologists in America such as Edward Hall, Ruth and John Useem and others began to specialise in the training of businessmen and development workers for cross-cultural contacts. Hall appears to be the first to use the term, intercultural communication, in his 1959 book, *The Silent Language*, and he has continued to introduce many of the seminal ideas of intercultural communication.

Hall writes especially for American, European and Japanese businessmen and women because innovations in communication often start with the 'merchants'. They have established the initial patterns of intercultural communication as far back as the invention of writing 5,000 years ago to keep records of grain supplies. In this view, businessmen and women are often too pragmatic and untrained in the ritual, poetic dimensions of life to notice the less rational, nonverbal aspects of radically different cultures.

Most Intercultural Communication is Nonverbal Many intercultural researchers would agree with Hall that only about 10% of communication is at the level of conscious, explicit beliefs and formal vocabulary and/or grammar. Far more important are the largely unconscious levels of gesture, facial expression, eye contact, tone of voice, the timing of conversational topics, touch, the degree of emotional expressiveness and the sense of when to be formal or informal. You may know the vocabulary and grammar perfectly, but unless you master the nonverbal levels you may be a miserable communicator.

Hall terms this part of culture which has not been formulated in words the Primary level culture (PLC). The PLC defines what is meaningful information for people, and messages which do not fit into the logic of this schema are simply lost on them. It is also the level most resistant to change precisely because it is hidden and implicit. American, European or Japanese cultures may appear superficially similar at the level of international scientific or business knowledge but differ profoundly at the core, primary level. Hall believes that the PLC is rooted in our nervous system and in the hemispheric functions of the brain through early socialisation so that we can never really transform this level of culture in our personalities.

Degree of Distance in Face-to-Face Interaction Hall pioneered the study of proxemics, the analysis of space as a form of communication. Research on distance in conversation - why, for example, people of Mediterranean or Arab countries prefer much closer face-to-face contact than Anglo-Americans - has become an important focus of intercultural communications because it indicates a range of communication styles. Hall has also studied the space dimension of communication in architecture and in the design or arrangement of furniture. For example, he interprets the German use of inner and outer doors as evidence of a search for greater privacy and interpersonal distance.

How Much Explicit Information? Another primary-level dimension of importance for intercultural communication is the assumption in cultures such as the Japanese that meaning is conveyed in the general context and feeling of the conversation (high context cultures) and not in explicit, logical or verbal expression (low context cultures). Ritual introductions and nonverbal cues, such as a glance of the eyes, which quietly trigger expected reactions, are more important in high context cultures.

Hall found that Western Jesuit missionaries in Japan failed to communicate because they insisted on low-context, rationalistic philosophical arguments, while for the Japanese the meaningfulness of a religion lies in the general contextual feeling.

Low context, explicit communication is linked with 'fast messages' like the American TV commercial that gives all the hard, persuasive facts about a very specific item in thirty seconds. High context messages may require a slower unfolding of the full connotative, holistic meaning.

Getting our Time Rhythms Synchronised The conceptions of time, Hall argues, are a core system of a culture around which beliefs, values and cultural institutions are organised. Some of the most radical barriers to intercultural communication arise from differing senses of time. Hall lists many time dimensions in a culture:

Biological time of growth, reproduction, sleep and forms of hibernation;

Personal time, that is, variations in expressive emotional and psychological states;

Physical time based on seasons;

Metaphysical time such as mystical out-of-the-body experiences that seem to escape time;

Sacred time of myth and ritual that transcend history;

Profane, human-made time of minutes and hours, etc.

However, one of the most important cultural definitions of time is **micro-time**, that is, the sense of time which lies at the unconscious, primary level of cultures around the world:

Monochronic sense of time - the attention to one thing at a time in linear, stepwise order;

Polychronic time - attention to various ongoing activities at one time. Monochronic time is associated by Hall with more industrialised, task-oriented and highly bureaucratized societies where complex tasks require division of labour and concentrated attention to the steps of a

production process. Polychronic time is associated with more person-oriented cultures and with cultures which emphasize a holistic expression of the poetic, humanistic aspects of life as well as task orientation. Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Latin American cultures tend to be more polychronic while North Atlantic cultures are more monochronic. Hall gives examples of how monochronic North Americans are frustrated when polychronic people do not keep to schedules, wasting time and money. But to polychronic people, North Americans appear to be insensitive, narrow personalities.

The Global Ballroom Hall suggests that successful intercultural communication depends very much on the harmonious synchronisation of rhythms of time, levels of emotional expressiveness and explicitness of meaning. Primary levels of communication such as music, poetry and dance, which are rooted in feelings and imagination, may be the deepest common denominator of culture and the bond which holds together the human species. William Condon has coined the term 'entrainment' to describe the process in which two people such as the new-born baby and the mother become synchronised into each other's rhythms. Present research suggests that these rhythms are deep in personalities at the level of brain waves and that synchronisation with one's own personal rhythms is an important aspect of personality development necessary for intercultural communication.

Hall, in his practical Handbook for Proxemic Research, has developed a system of observations to detect when people of the same or different cultures are out of sync. It includes 1) films of people interacting; 2) a notation system recording gestures, etc. 3) time-motion analyses; and 4) a computer programme to show when people are in sync or out of sync.

For example, a film of children on a school playground examined in slow motion revealed that, as one little girl moved from group to group, the children were in sync not only with each other but with her. Furthermore the rhythm of the girl, who was orchestrating the whole playground, was later found to be that of a currently popular rock music record. Hall concludes that there was an underlying cultural rhythm influencing independently both the music composer and the children.

Some researchers, such as Michael Prosser, consider Hall's generalisations too facile. Nevertheless, the research of Hall and others on the nonverbal level of intercultural communication is challenging many commonly held concepts of communication. At this level, there are no defined senders, no receivers and no readily identified messages. Communication at its deeper levels is a continuous process of unspoken synchronisation and shared rhythms that make up group identity.

II. MAJOR DEBATES IN THE FIELD OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The following four questions seem to generate the most discussion and debate:

- 1) What is Intercultural Communication? Most would agree that the focus of intercultural Communication is the study of cultural similarities or dissimilarities that impede or enhance communication across cultures. There is a tendency, however, to

distinguish cross-cultural research - the study of typical styles of communication in different cultures - from intercultural research - the study of people of different cultures interacting and communicating together. Some add that cross-cultural communication tends to be one-way, from one culture, as for example in the case of mass communications.

2) A Euro-American Bias? In the 1970s the Centro Monachin Fellowship in France called intercultural communication an American undertaking for the benefit of American public and private agencies. In fact, the field is attracting scholars from a variety of cultural and minority backgrounds, especially from Asia, India and the Middle East. These scholars are attempting to detect Euro-American ethnocentrism in the field and open up its theoretical conceptions to non-Western traditions of philosophical and scientific analysis.

Tulsi Saral, for example, points out that the Western obsession for a science which limits truth to what can be objectively observed, categorised and measured must be balanced with an intuitive, subjective, holistic awareness of deep structures of consciousness such as artistic perception, peak experiences or religious insight that are at the heart of intercultural communication. Instead of a sender - message - receiver model, he favours a 'convergence model' in which new information is originating from all parties of a communication process and the process of exchange moves towards mutual understanding.

3) An 'Inside' (Emic) or 'Outside' (Etic) Analysis? Ethnographers have traditionally avoided external cultural bias in their observations by adopting an inside, participant-observer, emic stance. But inter-cultural analysis is comparing two cultures or observing cultures of equal validity interacting. Which of the two cultures defines the categories of analysis? One solution is to construct an abstract scientific category that is objective, supposedly culture-free and applicable to all cultures. Another is to balance alternating inside (emic) and outside (etic) observations. Still another solution is to presuppose that in intercultural interaction both parties are constructing a new third culture. One then gives an inside description of the process and the result of this new common culture.

4) Focus on Cultural Conflict or Cultural Harmony? Molefi Asante notes two divergent emphases in the field: cultural dialogue and cultural criticism. The cultural dialogue school takes the position that human nature is essentially the same throughout the world and that the goal is to enhance the similarities and mutual agreements. This group tends to work through international peace organisations, transnational perception seminars and religious or quasi-religious movements to bring about world understanding.

The cultural criticism school starts with the premise of cultural conflict in order to clearly detect, define and classify differences, and to focus study on critical points of conflict. There is little sense in seeking similarities and harmony until we can first classify the unique features of every culture and then compare the similarities and differences. This group often works with problems of development communication where there is resistance to innovations or with business and

diplomatic missions having an underlying competitive relationship. Their research tends to come out of a tradition of comparative anthropology such as the work of Edward Hall, which primarily analyses the barriers to communication between cultures.

Tulsi Saral, however, questions the value of the continual listing of differences in communication styles, cognition, and values because it does not address the central issue of the field, the live intercultural interaction process. Moreover, in Saral's view, this reveals a Western bias in its emphasis on categorisation, classification, logical sequencing and rational relationships.

III. A NEW FOCUS: 'THE LIVE PROCESS'

The distinctive focus of "The Live Process" should be the analysis of the process of communication that occurs in specific intercultural situations or events. In a meeting between Japanese and American businessmen, for example, what mechanisms of verbal and nonverbal communication are actually used? Although some would argue that at best the parties become aware of their mutual differences, another view proposes that in the process a kind of common third culture emerges that is unique to this communication event. It is difficult to predict how people will communicate in a given intercultural event from the global American or Japanese culture because these cultures are internally heterogeneous and contexts of intercultural contact vary so greatly. Each episode of intercultural communication is essentially a creative synthesis.

Cronen and Shuter, in their chapter of Gudykunst's book, suggest that the task of research in to analyse:

- 1) how parties negotiate a set of third-culture communicational rules in an intercultural event;
- 2) how third-culture decisions regarding language and nonverbal behaviour are made; and
- 3) how intercultural communicators establish a common communicative ground.

Cronen and Shuter seek an explanatory theory for the emergence of a third culture largely at an interpersonal level, and they draw on theories of interpersonal communication. Analysis of how an intercultural 'third culture' emerges at the level of organizations or mass and international communication may require quite different models.

Building Understanding at the Interpersonal Level

A helpful review of major current theories of how persons establish common communicative grounds is listed below. Researchers Cronen and Shuter argue that the Co-ordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) is the best explanation.

- 1) 'Maximum Disclosure of Self' Theory The co-orientation explanation proposes that people reach mutual understanding and trust by revealing to each other their self-concepts and positively accepting these self-concepts. Cronen and Shuter note that such deep revelation is difficult in intercultural events and may actually lock the parties into a cycle of conflict. Co-orientation

expects too much and intercultural communication often works precisely because the parties get on with the task with quite different goals, understandings and values.

2) Difficulties of 'Rules' Theory Every culture has 'rules' for initiating and developing an interpersonal relation. For example, Anglo-Americans begin by asking questions while African-Americans employ leading statements challenging others to represent or define themselves. Ethnographic descriptions of these cultural rules of communication are not always helpful, however, in predicting the unique set of rules that emerge in specific contexts of intercultural exchange.

3) 'Uncertainty Reduction' Theory This approach suggests that, when strangers meet, they rather systematically gather information which enables both parties to predict how the others will react to their statements. Cronen and Shuter point out that people from different cultures may have very different ways of reducing uncertainty. This can lead to misunderstanding if these ways are not adapted. For example, Taiwanese, who come from a relatively high context culture, expect information to emerge from the context and often initiate relationships with set, ritualistic patterns. Americans, from low context cultures, are immediately explicit and expect everything to be freely negotiable from the start. Information gathering must be flexibly adapted to the event itself.

4) Co-ordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) This theory assumes that modern complex, heterogeneous societies entail frequent contact between cultures and subcultures and a high degree of awareness of the purposive task-orientation of formal organisations. This requires not just ordinary competence for communication that one learns by early socialisation within one's own cultural group, but an ability to detect conflicting communication patterns that can potentially destroy a relationship.

In order to train people to detect this vicious circle of mistaking the meaning of others, with increased defensiveness and conflict, a much more flexible model of communication is needed.

CMM refers to the process by which meanings are assigned to verbal or nonverbal messages in specific episodes of interaction. CMM does not presuppose that the messages mean the same to each party, but only that they can co-ordinate toward common goals. Suppose that the episode is the discussion between an Iranian husband and a liberated American wife over respective responsibilities in the household and family tasks. Each party brings a background of interpretations that form a hierarchy of specific reference to an episode:

- 1) cultural patterns - someone must be dominant in the home;
- 2) life-scripting and self-concept - the husband's interpretation that lack of dominance threatens his male identity;
- 3) the personal relationship - continuing tension over respective home responsibilities;
- 4) the episode itself - the wife nagging and the husband resisting;
- 5) sequence of speech acts - first insults followed by serious conflict...or...the husband apologises.

In this vicious circle of misunderstanding, the ideal would be for the parties to become aware of the destructive meanings they are assigning, re-evaluate their cultural patterns and self-concepts, and negotiate new 'rules' specific to this particular husband-wife relationship based on their common goals.

IV. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AT THE ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

Most of our intercultural and inter-ethnic contacts occur not at the interpersonal level, but within the structure of organisations such as multinational corporations, hospitals, schools or other forms of organisation that presuppose co-operation towards common goals and collective decision making. Research at this level treats organisations as forms of subculture. Typical questions are conflict management; integrating difficult cultural conceptions about how the organisation should function; creating a common 'third culture' of communication within an organisation.

Cultural Conflict in Organisations In the view of Stella Ting-Toomey, conflict within organisations can be the source of adaptive regeneration and innovative growth if it is appropriately expressed and handled. A crucial problem is how to manage conflict when different people of different cultural backgrounds have different conceptions of how conflict is to be resolved. For example, low context North Atlantic cultures tolerate a high degree of expressive conflict and do not feel that it disrupts personal relations, while high context Asian cultures fear and try to cover over conflicts. If an office administrator rejects a proposal of an American subordinate, the subordinate is likely to argue publicly and offer 'objective facts' to defend his or her case. A Japanese subordinate, suggests Ting-Toomey, would take the rejection in more subdued fashion, but see it as a sign of deep personal distrust and eventually resign.

Social Identity in Intercultural Communication Gudykunst proposes that the majority of interactions in modern organisations are more strongly influenced by group memberships - occupation, gender, class, race, etc. - than by personal dispositions. Conflict resolution is helped by analysis of how the internal host culture perceives the social identity of strangers and vice versa. In the 'Sociology of the Stranger', which Gudykunst borrows from Simmel and others, much depends on how much newcomers desire to be part of the ingroup (join, reside permanently or just visit), but also whether the attitude of the ingroup is positive, ambivalent or negative.

For example, if strangers desire only to visit and the ingroup attitude is positive, they will be typed as 'welcome guests', but if the ingroup perception is negative, they are 'intruders'. If the strangers desire to join and the ingroup perception is positive, they are 'newcomers with talents'. But if the ingroup perception is negative, the newcomers are 'suspicious marginals'.

Gudykunst also develops a typology which proposes that the potential for conflict over newcomers depends on a combination of the degree of desire to join the group, the intensity of worry about the disruptiveness of the newcomer, and the degree of normative consensus about how to treat the outsider. The potential for conflicts is least for

'guests' because there is high consensus on how to treat 'guests' and little anxiety that they will stay to disrupt even if they are 'odd'. The potential for conflict is greatest for 'marginal people' who are between two cultures; they have not cut ties with their original cultures, but also have not yet been assimilated into the new culture. The host culture is highly concerned about them because they are entering and uncertainty prevails about how to treat them. An example of highly conflictive entry suggested by Gudykunst is the case of women (outsiders) or suspicious minorities who want to move into the managerial level of organisations.

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AMERICAN CULTURE: SOME CHALLENGES TO THE CHURCH

Monica K. Hellwig

American culture would best be described as continuing dynamic interaction among the cultures and traditions of successive immigrant groups both old established and recently arrived. The Catholic component of the immigrant groups is no longer predominantly Irish - German - Italian, settled in ethnic enclaves and gradually reaching out to integrate with the remaining population. With new Catholic immigrant groups largely Latin American, Vietnamese and other Third World peoples, even the Catholic community of the United States lives within the wide range of world cultures; this miscellany is not only without but also within. Moreover, when we speak of Catholic heritage we cannot assume a monolithic structure. Historical survey of Catholic piety, theology, moral life, aesthetic expression and institutional structures shows immense variation both in the course of time and across cultures and geographic regions.

Responsibility for Shaping the Future The interaction of the pluralistic American culture with the Catholic heritage is not and cannot be blue-printed beforehand; it emerges as the product of interaction of free, creative agents choosing their associations, their emphases, their questions, their commitment of energy and time, and so forth. We do make our own history, though we do not make it any way we choose but within the limits and possibilities of the situation which has been shaped not directly by the divine creator but very largely by those who went before us. The immediate corollary to be drawn from this is that it is of greatest importance that we recognize wherein lies our own responsibility for the shaping of the future, that we read accurately the possibilities opened up for us by our past, and most of all that we make the right distinctions between what is God-given or divinely decreed, and what is fallibly human.

In that spirit this paper will propose five positive aspects of the American ethos which seem to the eyes of a theologian to offer redemptive initiatives recognizable as such from a Catholic viewpoint.

I. THE LEGAL SYSTEM

A significant aspect of American culture which is or can be a gift to the Church is a legal system derived from British Common Law. It is a system based on the equal standing of all before the law, and on strong rules of due process. A case can be made that these are matters lying very close to the heart of the redemption. Sin, as an over-assertion of human freedom against God, is manifest in self-centeredness, greed and domination. Sin has given us a history full of bullying by those who have managed to seize more wealth or more power, and who have set up systems everywhere in which people do not have equal dignity, equal rights, or equal freedom. They are systems based not on God's good creation, but on the bullying power that some have managed to acquire over others in our world. It is the teaching of Jesus that the poor, the

lowly, the despised and excluded are the heirs of the Reign of God, because when God reigns - wherever God reigns - such bullying patterns are superseded. In the legal systems of the world there has been progress towards this in varying degrees, and it is evident that the British Common Law system has developed a structure of content and process which particularly assures protection against oppression and injustice.

Substantive and Procedural issues that seem particularly pertinent to the redemption of the world in the American legal system as it has evolved in our times are both substantive and procedural. Substantive are the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and Laws, which are based on the concerns with human freedom and dignity that characterized the thought of the Enlightenment. While it has taken the Church about three centuries to come to terms with the Enlightenment, the Second Vatican Council took many positions which indirectly acknowledged the Church's indebtedness to that secularizing movement for new realizations of the possibilities of tolerance, of widespread education, for the freedom of the individual and so forth. It is clear that these aspects are prerequisites to a fuller, deeper community among human persons - a community such as is consonant with the reign of God among human persons and societies.

Procedural Principles as a Contribution to the Church Perhaps the greatest potential contribution of American culture to the Church in terms of legal systems is rather in procedural principles that are devised to guarantee justice for all. Such are: the strong presumption of innocence until there is clear and overwhelming proof of guilt; the right to confront one's accusers and cross question them; the right to have issues heard and tried by a jury of one's peers; the right of access to records concerning oneself kept by public authority; the right to insist on the terms of a duly concluded contract, even against employers or superiors; the right to have conflicts tried by the norms of properly promulgated and publicly accessible laws and regulations; the right to hear judgement given and explained; and the right of appeal. These procedural rights and all the implications that flow from them are taken for granted in countries using the Common law tradition, and they are a guarantee of respect for the dignity of the human person, such as is required for authentic justice and true human community.

The Church's Law and Structures It is clear that these civil guarantees of justice find little echo in the procedures of the Church within its own ranks even today, and the question arises why this should be so. It can, of course, be answered in terms of the heritage of Roman Law, the essentially conservative character of the institutional Church, the historical development of the hierarchic structures of the Western Church based on secular models of absolute monarchies in the past, the location of central church authority in the Mediterranean world, and so forth. Yet none of these contributing factors offers adequate reason for the maintenance of a system that is patently less just and less consonant with the goal of the reign of God which is a reign of wisdom and not of bullying power. American culture has challenged, and will continue to challenge, the institutional church's legal code and legal system as being somewhat less than truly human and therefore certainly not a positive step towards the welcoming of the reign of God into the affairs of the human community.

II. FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

Basic to the very existence of the United States of America is the desire to move beyond religious persecution to freedom of conscience in religious questions and matters of personal morality. The pilgrims and pioneers had in many cases experienced the effects of religious dogmatism and intolerance wielded by the civil power. European history runs red with the blood of those killed for their faith and their convictions. By Christian standards there can be little doubt that punishing and killing people for what they hold in good faith is not according to the example or the teaching of Jesus, but rather in direct contradiction to it. Deep in the American culture that emerged, therefore, is the need to take such power out of the hands of the state and its civil government. Hence the First Amendment to the Constitution, enacted into law in 1791, guarantees that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof".

Separation of Church and State As is well known the official teaching of the Catholic Church long resisted the separation of church and state under the general rubric that error has no rights so that Catholic rulers have a commitment precisely as rulers to the promotion of the Catholic faith and Church. The founding fathers of the United States, however, were clearly concerned with rights as vested in people and not in abstractions. Moreover, out of the experience of the plurality of the settlers they simply deduced the imperative of tolerance for the building of a human society in peace. It might be thought that this was simply a compromise, a necessary evil, an interim arrangement to be tolerated while "heretics" predominated, but to be ended as soon as the Catholic faith was widely enough established in any nation.

It is no longer necessary to argue against this as an official position because of the acceptance by Vatican II of the basic human right of freedom of conscience in religious' matters. The Council based its statement on religious freedom on the very nature of the human person as endowed with intellect and will and the capacity therefore to search after the truth in person and not by proxy. This natural law argument clearly corresponds closely to the pragmatic foundations that freedom of religion has in the American experience, though an even stronger argument might be made from the Catholic traditional understanding of faith as a theological virtue in which the assent of the intellect to the self-revelation of God is a deeply reflective and freely willed response.

Vatican II and Religious Liberty The fact remains that the theological reasons for religious freedom were not appreciated or accepted by the institutional Church until the American experience prompted the critical work of John Courtney Murray, and until he persevered against all official discouragement and reprimand and managed finally to bring the arguments in favor of religious liberty into the debates of the Council. This realization prompts some questions concerning the continuing need to press the issue, for instance in relation to the scholarly work of theologians within the Church.

The suppression of serious debate on religious and moral issues suggests less than full confidence in the freedom and dignity of the human person as the foundation for religious and moral discernment,

whether it be that of the faithful upon whose experience and questions the theologian reflects or whether it be that of the theologian. There also appears to be less than full confidence in the traditional understanding of natural law and how it is to be discerned by discussion among all persons of good faith. But most of all, there seems to be a failure of confidence in the theological virtues as rooted in the discernment and freedom of the human person responding to grace.

The Discernment of the Christian Faithful What is said of the work of the theologian might be suggested in rather similar fashion of the discernment of the Christian faithful. Because of the natural law arguments used, the Vatican II statement about freedom of religion has some clear implications for the freedom of conscience of the believer within the Church. Those arguments raise the question, for instance, whether detailed discernment of the exigencies of sexual and family relations is appropriately carried out for all cultures and societies and for all conceivable situations by one supreme authority in the world held by celibate persons unacquainted with the cultures and circumstances for which they are making discernments. The implications of the freedom of religion statement may yet have to be pushed much farther, to apply to the discernment of the living of the faith in changing, unique and challenging circumstances, and more particularly when intimate relationships are concerned.

III. FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY

In a somewhat similar vein, American life and traditions are based upon a deep commitment to freedom of speech and assembly, extended to include the free expression of opinion in the press. This guarantees critical reflection a public hearing even when it comes from groups in opposition to those who hold power, and even when it expresses unpopular minority opinions. How important this is for a just and humane society is evident from contrast with the prior censorship in dictatorships and military governments such as we know all too well in the world today. Repression of criticism concentrates too much power in too few hands. Even if the temptation is only to keep the surface of society unruffled and the machinery of administration running smoothly, the danger of injustice and oppression is great. But our Christian faith alerts us to greater dangers in the temptation to self-aggrandizement, arrogance, conceit, prejudice, laziness and so forth, by identifying the corrupting tendencies in unquestioned power over others.

It is clear that freedom of speech and assembly which is extended to include freedom of the press, academic freedom and so forth, makes the life of any society more untidy, less predictable, more complex to guide and govern. But it is also true that the right to speak out and be heard on matters of common interest and concern creates a stronger, more adaptable, more realistic society, and one consisting of more maturely adult cooperation. And here again is an experience that may be of great importance to the universal church. There are obvious dangers for any society that suppresses minority opinion and silences critics and those who offer alternative policies and interpretations. For a worldwide society those dangers are particularly threatening because an autocratic central authority is necessarily very limited in its access to information and to full understanding of local cultures and events. Free speech and communication from all who have something to say, and free exchange

of insights and understanding appear to be critically important to collaboration on such a world wide scale across cultures of wide variety.

Censorship of Theological Debate In such context, therefore, it may be worthwhile to point out that continuing efforts in the Church to apply prior censorship to theological debate by tighter controls over Catholic colleges and universities may achieve in the long run quite the opposite of what is intended. Instead of creating a more united community with sound grasp of Christian principles and their expression in a continuing, living, growing tradition, such exclusion of all contrary or critical positions may produce a central authority which does not grow or adapt and is therefore dead, and local churches in which more and more of the faithful drift into open or cryptic schism. The awkward legal and constitutional situation of the Catholic universities and colleges of the United States (as of several other countries of the world) may prove to be a gift in disguise to the Church, precisely because in these institutions the principle of freedom of speech as guaranteed in academic freedom is ensured by the secular charters and contracts which govern employment and activity in those institutions.

Communal Discernment It is no secret that there are those in the Church, including the American church, who deplore the conflict of laws which allows a greater freedom of speech in matters of faith in institutions of higher learning than the central authority in the Church freely grants. Yet it may be argued that a church in which the voice of dissent can be freely heard is much closer to the church of the Acts of the Apostles in which the newcomer Paul confronts the authority of Peter and prevails. It is closer to the church in which Bridget of Sweden and Catherine of Siena confront and challenge the Pope of their time and win their point, made out of their own Christian discernment. It is also much closer to the idea of the community seeking perfection in which St. Benedict legislates that the community gathered in council shall listen respectfully even to the youngest to hear what the Spirit has to say to the community. There is a basic theological insight behind all these examples: the perfect community in which the reign of God is established functions by communal discernment, not by sheer power or by authoritative voices obeyed because they are such. Only one is to be obeyed absolutely, and that is God. Because all other authority is relative to the divine authority, therefore, there is always a need for discernment, even with church authority. There is a residue of personal responsibility which is not abdicated by a faith commitment within the church.

IV. MODERN EXPERIENCE OF DEMOCRACY

This question of the ideal to which the church and its life ought to tend in its striving to welcome the reign of God among human persons and societies, is closely related to the modern experience of democracy. Again, it is well known that the earliest official responses from the Catholic church to modern realizations of democracy were not favorable. There was a fear of chaos and even more pressingly a fear that opposition to traditional monarchic structures would necessarily involve rejection of church authority and of faith itself. In the course of time the democratic experiments did not justify this fear, and church teaching came to tolerate and later even to praise a mode of civic life in

which responsibility for the affairs of the nation is as widely shared as possible through government by elected representatives.

The Early Church The early objections raised to this by church authority appear to have by passed any reflection on the patterns of decision making and leadership in the churches of the pre-Constantinian era. Until the emperors intervened for secular reasons of consolidation of an empire won by military conquest, church leadership did not follow the strongly hierarchic and autocratic patterns that subsequently developed.

Indeed, there are strong indications in the New Testament and in the earlier Church Fathers that the ideal for the Christian community was precisely that of a community living and coordinating its affairs as much as possible by consensus. Even the many admonitions to remain in communion with the bishop in the local church must, of course, be read in the realization that these bishops were not imposed on the communities by an outside authority but were chosen by the community either explicitly by popular acclaim or implicitly as the natural leaders emerging from the group. In those cases where they were designated by their predecessors, this also seems to have been in the awareness of support from community consensus. There is every indication that the local community shaped itself, so to speak, from below. Moreover, there is very clear evidence that not only in the first three centuries but even after the Emperors extended their patronage and domination to the churches, matters pertaining to the universal Church were to be decided collegially by consensus of representatives of the churches.

Not only is this structured and systematic effort to coordinate the public affairs by consensus an achievement of human maturity in the secular realm. It is a challenge to the Catholic Church about its own true nature. It may well be that the continuous discomfort of Americans with the authoritarian pattern of church structures and church life, and the frequent tensions and disruptions that arise from this, are a particularly valuable contribution to the Church's long term realization of its own true nature.

The Principle of Subsidiarity The American experience of democracy is unique because of the plurality of cultures and ethnic groupings that must be included, and also because of the sheer size of both population and territory. For this reason the principle of subsidiarity has necessarily played an important role in all levels of governmental organization as well as in many other aspects of life, and it has certainly shaped the consciousness of Americans in their activities and expectations. They have come to experience this principle as an important expression of human dignity and freedom, and an important aspect of true community in contrast to dictatorial and oppressive patterns of relationship.

It is not surprising, therefore, that American Catholics, reflecting on the history of the churches and on the implications of the Second Vatican Council, have begun to wonder why we do not see more local initiative in church policies and actions, why the faithful have no voice in the choosing of their pastors at the parish and diocesan level, and why questions of the orthodoxy of theologians are not referred to consultation by their peers. Such attitudes and questions can, of course, be seen as acts of insubordination to church authority in its present

patterns, but it may be wiser to consider whether they might also be a prophetic challenge concerning the nature of the church.

V. OPTIMISTIC SPIRIT OF ENTERPRISE

Another positive factor of the contemporary American ethos which seems to me to be theologically significant is the optimistic spirit of enterprise in American culture. As we look about us we see a keen interest in invention, economic and technical development, advances in communication, data retrieval, analysis and all aspects of education and of health care. There has been a subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, tendency on the part of the Vatican to view these aspects of American life and activity as regrettably worldly - a tendency sometimes shared in preaching, teaching and writing even by American church leaders, clergy and theologians. There is evidently a seductive power in the notion that the spiritual in the biblical sense is to be identified with the immaterial, the a-historical, the other-worldly and the unpractical. Yet in orthodox doctrine the spiritual in the biblical sense is the revitalizing of all creation by the redeeming Breath of God drawing all things to their true purpose and focus.

As Christians we confess our faith in the doctrine of creation - one God, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. The foundation stories in Genesis 1 and 2, on which all subsequent theology of creation rests, place the human person and human society at the center of creation with the responsibility to cultivate the world and its resources, to co-create, to develop the world's possibilities. When the narrative in Genesis tells us that human beings are made in the likeness of God, the only characteristic that has been ascribed to the divine thus far in the story is that of being a creator, a maker, an inventor, one who brings forth what never yet has been, a practical imagination. This is the image to be reflected in the human person and in human society.

It is true that the story stresses the centrality of God's wisdom and power at the center of the harmony of creation - at the center of the garden. But that central guiding force is represented as being in polarity, not in conflict, with human freedom and creativity. It is therefore surely a distortion that represents conformity to the will of God as essentially passivity or resistance to change.

Interdependence with One another Biblical and traditional perceptions of creation, sin and redemption suggest clear criteria for the exercise of human creativity in obedience to the will of God. The most persistent criterion is respect for the human needs, dignity and freedom of others. To be human is to be a creature that is relationally constituted; a primary fact of our creaturehood is our interdependence with one another. A second criterion is a basic creaturely humility that acknowledges finitude as practically experienced in bodily needs and limits, in the grounding of intellect, effect and will in our physiological functioning, and most of all in death with its unpredictable timing. Such humility certainly must include a contemplative aspect and a phase of self-surrender, but to be genuine creaturely humility it must also accept the power of creative activity.

Interpersonal Relationships Such enterprise and creativity are to be found not only in technical advances, but also in the construction of society and its various patterns of personal relationships. Thus there has been a spirit of enterprise in communications that favors frank and critical exchange of information and opinion, and favors also a wide dissemination of information that is of public interest. In a similar way, American education encourages critical evaluation in all fields rather than memorization and acceptance on the authority of teacher or text. This critical evaluation can then be applied to professional, service and business activities.

Conclusion: It may be objected to the approach that I have taken here that it considers the Church too much on a human basis and does not give due credit to the divine element of the Church. This has been a deliberate emphasis, inasmuch as the divine element of the Church is its foundation, its inspiration and its goal, which leaves a good deal of decision making, constructing, adapting and so forth to be done by human prudence under the impulse of grace. It does not ask for renunciation of human prudence but for a refinement and enhancing of it. Therefore the human activities of the Church itself must come under scrutiny as the times and situations allow. That is why, after all these centuries, there can still be a genuine reciprocity of influence between the Church and American culture.

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SOME CRITICAL THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL ISSUES FACING THE CHURCH IN EAST AFRICA TODAY

Laurenti Mageša C.

INTRODUCTION:

The new climate of openness introduced in the Catholic Church by the Second Vatican Council created unprecedented but, to many, most welcome possibilities of theological research, dialogue and pastoral practice. There have been, of course, many efforts to stem the tide of this development. These were already evident during the course of the Council itself. They are even much more obvious today. Nevertheless, the spirit of readiness to listen to and to discern the import for the Church of various theological viewpoints and approaches to pastoral practice has prevailed. One is here reminded of the counsel of Gamaliel to the Sanhedrin as regards the Christian movement that the first disciples of Jesus were spear-heading: (Acts 5:33-30). There is nothing to fear from the truth. A significant part of the Church has taken this realization seriously. The growth and maturation of local theologies and various modes of pastoral action in many parts of the world today are an indication of this.

Has there been any significant degree of development in theological thought and pastoral action in East Africa since the Council? Many observers find it difficult to assert that there has been. Pastorally, our Small Christian Communities have yet to make the impact on society that the Base-level Ecclesial Communities have been able to make in Latin America. There are those who claim that Catholicism in this region has generally been guided by a rather literal, "un-inculturated" interpretation of doctrine and religious behaviour. Perhaps an example from recent events may help to illustrate and clarify the claim.

On the theological level one must ask about the documents on liberation issued in 1984 and 1986 by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. These documents touched on issues of great importance not only to the internal life of the Church in East Africa itself, but also to the Church's relationship with the revolutionary world of which this region forms a part. As important statements, one would have expected some theological attempt at their contextualization or incarnation within the East African environment. However, these documents aroused no such effort. What has the local Church here done with these documents? How has it handled them? These are questions that still need to be answered.

THE QUESTION OF ORTHODOXY

At issue here is the question of the meaning of sound faith or orthodoxy. For it may be that the respectful submission of mind and will required of the faithful towards even the non-infallible teaching of the Church's Roman magisterium is translated too rigidly. In that sense orthodoxy is equated with the letter rather than the spirit of what is

being taught. What is sound Christian faith or orthodoxy? How may local churches express it (orthopraxis)? These are questions that the East African Church must clarify for itself and live accordingly. Involved in these questions is an understanding of what the Church is, for different understandings of the reality of the Church inevitably lead to different attitudes towards and judgements of orthodoxy.

Images of the Church: Latin American theologian Leonardo Boff has noted various ways of understanding Church, but he describes two conceptualizations which are central to our concerns. One is the image of Church that is predominantly juridical. This conceptualization highlights the Church's hierarchical structure. It stands in relationship to the community as ruler and governed, producer and consumer of the sacraments, active preacher and passive hearer of the word. This is an image of Church that makes a sharp distinction or even differentiation between clergy and laity based mostly on criteria of status due to special "divine election" of the former.

The other image is that of Church as "faith community (*communitas fidelium*), globally responsible for all the affairs of the Church." In this vision of Church there is no polarity between hierarchy and the rest of the community. The hierarchy is here seen to be an integral and equal part of the whole community. It subsists within the community. Its function is to serve the community's life of oneness, worship and witness as a principle of "animation and inspiration, of unity and universality." At the centre of this vision of Church is therefore not hierarchy but faith in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit by her charisms is believed to work in every member of the community. She inspires and activates the community by way of each person within it, using them to constantly open out to the divine and so fulfill humanity.

Missiologically (even as regards mission within the same region or locality and culture) evangelization becomes a matter not

...of transplanting the church deductively, but of implanting the church inductively...."To implant the church in to enter into dialogue with the culture and the religions of the country. The object of this dialogue is to render gradually more explicit and conscious the presence of God's Spirit, which transforms and penetrates human beings' lives."

Of the two images or conceptualizations of Church just described, it is the latter that allows authentic faith which is mature and committed to develop. This is the kind of orthodoxy that does not discard discernment: it is a reading of the "signs of the time" in the light of the Gospel. Or, if we may paraphrase St. Anselm's apothegm, it is an understanding in faith.

Now, this kind of mature and committed orthodoxy, this faith in God according to knowledge, cannot begin and end with the traditional catechism. It can be facilitated or promoted by magisterial statements but it does not confine itself to these. Dogmas and other doctrines are essential but in themselves are not enough. All of these elements serve faith in God according to knowledge only when they are considered from concrete perspectives, when they are situated within concrete contexts. Incarnation or inculturation of the faith also means, "to render

gradually more explicit and conscious the presence of God's Spirit" in the local or particular Church.

THE CONTEMPORARY EAST AFRICAN SITUATION

The issue facing the Church in East Africa is to be able to define its faith in Christ, to formulate the expression of that faith in relation to the contemporary situation in the region. What are the sufferings and what are the expectations of the people of God here? What guidance have the Scriptures and the various traditions of the Church to offer as we face the situation and bear witness to the lordship of Christ in it? It should be clear that the Roman magisterium alone cannot provide adequate solutions to local questions such as these. In other words, it is not up to the Roman magisterium to work out for every local or regional Church its expression of faith and its modes of bearing witness to Christ. Christian life cannot be lived vicariously. The supreme magisterium offers important guidance for the proper living out of faith. But the actual living out of this faith in all its dimensions, or in a word, orthodoxy in concrete, depends principally on the reflection and orientation of local or particular Churches. Does the life of the East African Church indicate an appreciation of this theological requirement for true Catholic orthodoxy?

A Receptacle Attitude: The problem in the Church in East Africa in this respect may therefore be described as a deep-rooted and pervasive reluctance or inability to rid itself of what one might call, for want of a better word, a "receptacle" attitude to certain faith expressions. This is the equation of authentic faith to particular doctrinal formulations. It is even more fundamentally the problem of accepting for too long the status of "young mission Churches" that has been assigned to it. That status, when accepted and relished, has psychological and practical consequences in the life of faith of any Church. The most serious of these is that faith will hardly be actuated by knowledge in the power of the Spirit.

Considering the situation of the Church in East Africa today, more than a century after the region's initial evangelization, you cannot but wonder whether it is not analogous to the early "mission compounds" of ransomed slaves who were the object of evangelization that V. J. Donovan speaks about. These compounds are almost non-existent now in their earlier form:

But perhaps more serious in the long-run this early missionary effort in East Africa has left its subtle mark, the mark of slavery, on all succeeding generations of missionary work. The mission compounds (in a new form) are still in evidence in East Africa. And the questionable motivation for baptism, the subservience and dependence of christianized peoples, and the condescension of the missionaries, are themes that have returned again and again in the intervening hundred years.

Jean Mark Ela decries the "mimicry" he observes in the life of the African Church in general. He sees it to be "the fruit of intellectual indifference. "Such mimicry, he argues, is an indication of "the fragility of churches almost totally bereft of the initiative of reflection and research on the problems of faith in the African context."

THE LOCAL PARTICULAR CHURCH

A clear understanding and serious acceptance of itself as particular or local is therefore an urgent issue in the life of the Church in East Africa. Without this understanding and acceptance, what we have referred to as its status of a container Church will doubtless prevail.

What is the local particular Church and what bearing has it to the growth of knowledge in faith? We will cite Boff again. He has described the particular Church in this way:

The particular church is the universal church (the salvific will in Christ through the Spirit) in its phenomenal, or sacramental presentation.

The particular church is the universal church rendered visible within the framework of a time and a place, a medium and a culture.

The particular church is the universal church concretized; and in being concretized, taking flesh; and in taking flesh, assuming the limits of place, time, culture, and human beings.

The particular church is the whole mystery of salvation in Christ - the universal church - in history, but not the totality of the history of salvation in Christ. For each particular Church is in itself limited and, precisely, particular. Accordingly, each particular church must be open to the others, which likewise, each in its own manner, concretize and manifest the same universal salvific mystery - that is, the church universal.

Faith Lived Within the Limits of Place, Time, Culture. This clarifies two fundamental points, both of which have been touched upon above. The first is that for faith to be a living faith, it must be situated and professed by being lived within the "limits of place, time, culture, and human beings" - that is, in a word, within the limits of the local Church. The consequence of this is that no one particular Church, no matter how learned, privileged and exalted, may impose its own particular profession of faith upon any other. The expression of faith of each one of them is particular and searching. Precisely because of that, there is a demand in faith that particular churches be open to each other. This is the only condition of a mature relationship.

Insofar as the transmission, on the one hand, and the appropriation, on the other, of the faith Tradition between Churches (and individuals) is concerned, humility and responsible responsiveness are key elements. The words of T.H. Groome are especially relevant here: We need to be careful... not to impose our version of the story on the participants as a hardened ideology. This is why I like the phrase "making the Tradition accessible." It implies that the ones given access still retain their responsibility to work with it as a living tradition of walking pilgrims. While we must faithfully remember where we have come from, the future of our community is not simply the repetition of our past. The Tradition is neither a negative control nor a limit upon our future but rather is the sustaining source from which we constantly draw new life. Giving access to the Tradition rather than imposing it upon people's lives means that the participants must be encouraged to critically appropriate the version of the story that we make present.

Concrete Incarnation or Inculturation of the Faith The second point is that the responsibility of reading or discerning "the salvific will in Christ through the Spirit" rests squarely on the shoulders of the particular Church in the act of living its faith. It does not consist in mere intellectual assent to nebulous doctrine or magisterial statements. To put this assertion positively, faith requires, as we have mentioned previously, concrete incarnation or inculturation of the meaning of magisterial doctrines and statements. But to contribute to the faith of given local Church, this meaning must "speak to" the life-meaning of that local Church "within the framework of a time and a place, a medium (i.e. language and its conveyances) and a culture". Once again, when reference is made to the need of inculturating the life and doctrine of the Church, this is what is meant. And this is a critical issue for the Church here.

Local Church - Worldwide Catholic Community For the incarnation of the faith to be real in East Africa, moreover, it is necessary to examine openly what, in an article in 1975, P.A. Kalilombe, then Bishop of Lilongwe Diocese in Malawi, referred to as the problem of the relationship between the local Churches of Africa and the worldwide Catholic communion, and especially with Rome. As Kalilombe notes the problem here was felt very acutely by the bishops from Africa at the 1974 Synod in Rome. In their Report on the Experiences of the Church in the Work of Evangelization in Africa, the bishops pointed out that just as most African countries have come of age by freeing themselves from the tutelage of colonialism, the Church in Africa has likewise "come of age." What does this adulthood of the African Church imply? According to the bishops' Report: "This fact implies a radically changed relationship between the Church in Africa and the Sacred Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples, the Missionary Institutes, and the other Churches in Europe and America."

Radically Changed Relationships: Easier said than done. It is well known that most African local Churches are almost totally depended (particularly financially) upon the Western Churches. On the institutional level, therefore, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that until now the churches in Europe and America are our "prototypes" and "the source of our very being." East African local Churches stand in relation to the European and American Churches - and to Rome in particular - as proteges to be protected. But according to the bishops' report this is the relationship that must be "radically changed." There is need to depart from an excessively comparative to a more complementary view of the particular Church in all areas. The implications of this modification of relationships reach to the very roots of the Church - to the diocese, to the parish, and specifically, to the basic or Small Christian Community (SCC).

Evaluation of Small Christian Communities There is a recent evaluation of the state of health and potential of SCCs in Eastern Africa ten years after their promulgation by the bishops of the region. The evaluation by four East Africans has a lot of good things to say about SCCs as a "pastoral priority" here. Where there is a genuine commitment to the building of SCCs, the evaluation rightly claims, the Church is much more vital and mature. The faith is being concretized in these places in acts of justice and charity. In short, wherever SCCs are strong, the Church is seen as a community. Here

each member, priest, lay or religious, is allowed to speak and contribute to the growth of the community. Operative in this outlook has been an ecclesiology based on the conviction of the universal gifts of the Holy Spirit and the basic equality of all members of the Church by virtue of the same baptism in the same Lord.

Nevertheless, the evaluation makes it clear that genuine and viable SCCs in East Africa are few and far between. The reasons for this are interesting and enlightening. The evaluation notes that in some places the formation of SCCs has been "too clerically-centered." The report continues: "When the laity are responsible the clergy tend to be very strict" and so there is "oversupervision." Whereas the laity are willing and ready to accept change for the betterment of the entire life of the church, the majority of the clergy, according to the evaluation, "do not want changes. It is difficult to convince them to be committed to SCCs. That is why this work stands still."

There is no growth in the strength of the SCCs because the clergy do not want change. It means that a modification of relationships at this basic level of Church has not taken place. The clergy in this paradigm try to be for the laity the "prototypes" "the source of their very being." There is no community here in the sense of the recognition, acceptance and use within the community of the different gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the different members of the same community. On the part of the majority of the members, the laity, there will necessarily be inertia and lethargy. But lethargy in the faith is not conducive to the inculturation of the faith. Here is a serious theological issue deserving the attention of the Church in this region.

MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

Closely related to the foregoing issues is the question of ministry. Ministry in the Church is as old as the Church itself. In the early Church there were as many ministers as there were recognizable needs. Needs differed from community to community. So St. Paul could demand of the Corinthians respect for every minister and ministry in the community: "Are all apostles?" he asks rhetorically, "Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles or have the gift of healing? Do all speak in tongues, all have the gift of interpretation of tongues?" (1 Cor. 12:29-30). Yet, according to St. Paul, all of these ministries, and many more, are essential for the life and growth of the Lord's body, the Church.

The list of ministries in the New Testament includes apostles, prophets and teachers, evangelists, elders, bishops and deacons. All are endowments of the Holy Spirit and gifts of God to the Church. Ephesians 4:12-13 is one of the most beautiful and accurate descriptions of the purpose of these and all other Christian ministries. Christ places ministers "in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ, till we become one in faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, and form that perfect person who is Christ come to full stature." Historical developments (no doubt under the direction of the Spirit) particularized the episcopacy, presbyterate and the diaconate into definite offices. They involve today a complicated process of attainment and as such may not be needed in every SCC. The preponderance of evidence from the source of our belief however, is that the other ministries or

functions of service to the poor, the sick and the otherwise needy (1Cor. 12:28); to edify comfort and console (1Cor. 14:3); or to encourage, judge or warn (Rev. 2ff) - that is generally to actualize the good news in various ways - are needs of all Christian communities. The SCCs of our region are no exception.

What Edward Schillebeeckx has written in reference to the global Church applies also to the East African situation. In his book on ministry, The Church with a Human Face, Schillebeeckx submits as evident and acceptable that:

It is the apostolic right of the community to have leaders: i.e.. a leader (male or female) or a 'significant other figure', who on the basis of the fundamental values of the group, clarifies, dynamizes and also is able to criticize the community, and in so doing can also be subject to the criticism of the community.

The type of extrinsic, strictly parish-based, clerical ministry now predominating in SCCs in East Africa is hardly conducive to the vitality or viability of these communities.

Exactly What Types of Ministry are required in a given community? As was the practise even in New Testament times, the number and types of ministry depended on the needs of each particular community. Only the methods of election and installation of ministers were debatable.

From the New Testament we see that the personal choice or selection of the Apostles by Jesus himself gave them a privileged and unique position in ministry. It is also clear that the Apostles in their turn "commissioned" other ministers (cf. Acts 6:6, 1 Tim. 1:6). It must not be forgotten that in the New Testament, the role played by individuals who were recognized by various communities to possess the gifts of the Holy Spirit was considerable. Prophets and teachers are a case in point. Furthermore, the role of the community as a whole (not only their leaders) in the election of ministers cannot be ignored. Acts 6:2-6 seems to emphasize this. The Twelve proposed that assistants be instituted. "The proposal was unanimously accepted by the community" (v.5). The community selected the Seven. Finally, the community presented the seven to the Twelve "who first prayed over them and then imposed hands on them" (v.6). In this not one of the better models of leadership selection in SCCs today?

Briefly, the issue in this area, therefore, concerns forms and methods of ministry in the SCCs. Who will be appointed to serve? By whom? How? How long should the term of ministry be in any given area. Should given ministries be permanent as long as the minister lives, or of temporary tenure, as long as the minister is deemed capable of serving? As theological issues, these questions are crucial. They may be postponed, but in the long run they cannot be evaded.

THE CHURCH AS SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

Another issue that can only be postponed but finally not evaded in our region has to do with the stance of the Church on socio-political questions. As mentioned earlier, this is the level of the Church's

activity and life where it is required to look outward beyond itself to the wider society with which it must relate. It is a crucial issue as well. If it remains overly introspective, the Church is bound to die. It may grow in numbers (as it is now doing all over Africa) but in terms of its transforming mission in the world it will be dead. Judgement will fall upon it from its very own profession of being corporately for the world a disciple and agent of the liberation of Christ. Is anything clearer in the Scriptures than that God is liberator of the oppressed? That Christ's fundamental mission was to actuate profoundly this liberation among humanity (Lk. 4:18-19)? That to effect and demonstrate his goodnews of Salvation, the news of love - justice, he gave up his life on the cross. (Jn. 15:13; Jn. 4:7ff)?

Effective Agent Of Liberation: Let us underline the point. The mandate of the living Church is to be an effective agent of liberation in the world. One of the many parts of world that surely needs the liberation of Christ in all its aspects and dimensions is East Africa. Different political regimes here, aware of their own part in the oppression of the people, want to reduce the activity of the Church to what they refer to as the "religious," "spiritual" sphere. In the eyes of the Christian faith, however, the entire human person is the home of the Spirit and, as such, God-like (Gen.2:7). Consequently anything that affects the human person in any dimension - be it social, cultural, economic - is at the core religious and spiritual. It has implications for the liberative mission of the Church. One need not belabour the point. It is now an established and accepted principle of ecclesiology, missiology and Christian ethics.

The understanding of Church - what the Church is - in this context must not be ambiguous. If anywhere, it is in the context of her mission as the conscience of society in matters of love and justice that what and who precisely the Church is must be clear to all. There are fundamental reasons for this. Anonymous, clandestine or equivocal witness is often ineffective. The identity of the individual witnessing and the clarity of the witness are crucial to the credibility of the Christian message. This is the lamp set upon a stand (Mk. 4:21), the city upon the hill (Mt. 5:14-16) that the Gospels talk about. Proclamation of the good news of salvation must not be muzzled. The messenger of the good news must make bold to proclaim it despite inevitable adversities.

Constantine more than any other emperor managed to tame the church, and made it serve his political interests by 'giving' it freedom of worship. In East Africa the authorities have managed to talk of freedom of worship in such a fashion as to make even some church leaders think of it as a deal between church and state, not realising that freedom of worship is an essential freedom given by God and 'protected' by the state.

SCCs and Social Conscience: We must revert to the SCCs as the primary embodiments of the Christian conscience. For here once again is the most basic "phenomenal or sacramental" expression of "the salvific will in Christ through the Spirit," The message of Christ, of freedom, is concretized here through the help of the Spirit working among the faithful. The witness of Christians against misuse of political power, abuse of human rights, denial of basic personal and social freedoms, corruption, embezzlement of public funds, and many more similar abuses begins in the SCCs if anywhere at all. This is

the level where all faithful organize, through the sacraments, and supremely through the eucharist, to heal the sick, make the deaf hear, the dumb talk and the lame walk. Through the care and concern of the faithful, together with their ministers at this level, miracles happen. Here is where the Church begins to reclaim its independence as a social critic.

Harassment, derision and persecution against the witnessing followers and ministers of Christ will be most intense depending on the clarity of the witness. We have it on the word of Christ himself: "no pupil outranks his teacher...If they call the head of the house Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!" (Mt. 10:24-25). But he adds at once: "Do not let them intimidate you" (Mt. 10:26). If or when threats do come, as they have and will come in the course of its life, the Church can do no better than use the words of Peter before the dignitaries of the Sanhedrin:

"Leaders of the people! Elders! If we must answer today for a good deed done to a cripple and explain how he was restored to health, than you and all the people... must realize that it was done in the name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 4:9-10).

Better, indeed, "to obey God than men!" (Acts 5:29). But if this obedience is not to remain a pious platitude, the faithful must organize. We have already noted this. It is a crucial point. The term "organize" is used advisedly because there is no alternative to it in the process of effective witness to the gospel. The fact is that the Church as a community is an organized body of people, sociologically and spiritually. In the East African context today this reality must be highlighted and strengthened.

Strength in Unity: Sociologically, it is up to the leaders to work with the people towards an awareness of the strength that is in unity. And what better place to begin the process of awareness and unity in God's word than in the SCCs? In unity the Church is strong. It can influence events. It must turn the dehumanizing world "upside down." This is why Christians pray to God to send forth the Spirit that all may be recreated, and that the face of the earth may be renewed.

Acting in unity against dehumanization requires spiritual and intellectual preparation. In a sense, awareness precedes the struggle or, even better explained, they influence each other. They form a circle. Prayer and meditation on Scripture within the context of the existential social situation are now a notable feature of the few, really genuine and viable SCCs in East Africa. But this must spread. Coupled with it, there needs to be an intensive effort to include the social teaching of the Church in the pre - and post-baptismal as well as ongoing catechesis of the faithful. It is surprising how this teaching is either not known or is ignored in catechetical work. One would dare say that in the order of priorities today in the context of East Africa, the social teaching of the church ranks second only to the Scriptures themselves in importance.

(Among the footnotes to Laurenti's article we draw attention to the following references:

- All the documents of the council were so forward-looking that their implications for theological and pastoral development have yet to be adequately tapped some 25 years later. Of particular interest for us, however, are the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world (*Gaudium et Spes*). For a collection of all the Council's documents see, among other compilations, W. M. Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II*. N. Y., 1966.

- J.S. Ukpong, "The Emergence of African Theologies" in *Theological Studies*, 45:(1984), pp. 501-536.

- J.G. Healey, "Four Africans Evaluate SCCs in E. Africa" in *AFER*, 29:5 (1987), pp. 266-277.

- L. Boff, *Ecclesigenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*, N.Y., 1986, pp. 23-24.

- V.J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, N.Y., 1982, p.5.

- J.M. Ela, *African Cry*, N.Y., 1986, p.107.

- T.H. Groome, "Walking Humbly With Our God" in W. Brueggeman, et al., *To Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly: An Agenda for Ministers*, N.Y., 1986, p.61.

- P.A. Kalilombe, "The African Local Churches and the World-wide Roman Catholic Communion; Modification of Relationships as Exemplified by Lilongwe Diocese", in E. Fashole-Luke, et al., eds., *Christianity in Independent Africa*, London, 1978, pp. 79-95.

- E. Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry*, N.Y., 1985, p.256.

- H. Okullu, *Church and Politics in East Africa*, Nairobi, 1984.)

Ref. *African Christian Studies*,
Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa,
Vol. 4, No. 2; June 1988.
P.O. Box 62157, Nairobi, Kenya.

DIOCESAN SYNODS YESTERDAY AND TODAY IN FRANCE

Monique Hébrard

Some twenty diocesan Synods throughout France have either just ended or are still underway. Some observers wonder if this is merely a flash in the pan. Whatever it may be, it is a subject of passionate interest: more than 200 people attended a two day session organised by the Faculty of Canon Law in Paris on November 30 and December 1, 1988. Specialists in Canon Law, students, but also lay people and priests responsible for leading Synods and a good fifteen or so bishops attended. Mgr. Gilson, Bishop of Le Mans, who had just held his Synod was happy to share his experiences, while four bishops of Synods still in process collected useful information. Another ten or so who were contemplating the usefulness of a Synod in their diocese were able to gain more material for reflection.

Diocesan Synods are not an invention of the new Canon Law. In a brilliant exposé, Professor Gaudemet of Strasbourg recalled that the oldest Synod known in France is that of Auxerre which took place between 585 and 603. We have the list of members (34 priests, 4 abbots and some deacons) and the 45 canons who attended it.

Synodality is an ancient concept of the Church, but prior to the VIth century, since each community was grouped round its bishop, there was no point in a diocesan Synod. It did have a point with the upsurge of evangelisation in rural areas. The history of Synods has been chaotic. Councils from time to time recalled the need for them and called for regular meetings (usually annually), but while certain bishops observed the prescription (the future Pope Benedict XIII convened 38), others ignored it. And this was true to the present day. Between 1919 and 1951 there were only 185 Synods in France.

But the Synods down through history were nothing like Synods today. In those days it was a purely clerical assembly. Professor Gaudemet only found one mention of the presence of lay people - in Canon 7 of the Council of Toledo in 636 - and some rare exceptions in the XIXth century. Another difference - these Assemblies were passive. The bishops convened, presided and legislated, while the priests' only right was to listen and only duty was to obey by putting into practice the Synodal statutes. Then the Synods were a means for the bishop to keep control of his clergy and to form them, to impose a retreat and of course to dictate laws for the government of his diocese.

We therefore had to wait for the Second Vatican Council for the revolution which led to the People of God sharing in the government of the bishop. As Patrick Valdrini, Dean of the Faculty of Canon Law in Paris and the organiser of the Colloquium,* said:

"the Synod recognises the right of the diocesan community to decree what is good for the diocese".

We must, however, be careful to respect the nuances: even if the synodal assembly takes a democratic vote on the proposals formulated by

the work of thousands of the faithful and which the bishop will turn into synodal law, it is not democracy! The bishop remains the sole legislator. Hence a certain ambiguity which Fr. Valdrini summarises as follows: "The Synod is an institution whose end is to legislate but which has no legislative power". An ambiguity which Mgr. Gilson can manage perfectly and honestly.

The bishop, stresses Patrick Valdrini, is both a member and the "vis-à-vis" of the Synod. He has the right (like any other member) and even the duty (as the leader of his diocese and the representative of the universal Church) to intervene before the vote. The Bishop of Le Mans used this right on a number of occasions. Once to warn that if the proposal which called for all staff to be paid the legal minimum wage was passed he would be unable to implement it without endangering the diocesan budget. Another time to remind the assembly that it was not the task of a diocesan Synod to vote on a proposal with regard to the ordination of married men because this referred to a law of the universal Church. On the other hand, Patrick Valdrini stressed that once proposals have been voted, the bishop cannot change them. He can, eventually, fail to implement them... but at the risk of damaging the credibility of the Synod as an institution.

The present synodal Assembly, even if it has no legislative power, is the real actor and promoter of synodal laws and these are voted by a majority of lay people because they generally represent 60% of the Assembly.

There is a serious and rapid revolution after fifteen centuries of immobility! What does it matter that we are still feeling our way? "It is a living right very close to the pastoral reality," says Patrick Valdrini. Moreover, in Nancy, John Paul II gave the green light for the invention of XXth century Synods because the Code is incomplete.

But Jean Passicos, Fr. Valdrini's predecessor, is more measured in his enthusiasm: "Their exceptional character might well see them to the grave". Indeed, French-style diocesan Synods are cumbersome affairs involving thousands of people over a period of months and covering a mass of issues. It is a sort of up-dating of the diocesan Church in terms of the Council. But if we wish to ensure that the Synod as an institution does not once again become lost in history then we must not remain imprisoned by the present formula. Thus we await a second Synod of those who have already ended their first in the hope that they will be able to limit their aims.

In any case, synodality itself is not yet in the grave. It will be the theme of the World Congress of Canon Lawyers in 1990.

* See La Croix, February, 28, 1989.

Ref. Quoted in Ministries and Communities,
Pro Mundi Vita, No. 60 - 1989/2, Pp. 2 - 4.
Abdij van't Park - Abdijdreef 7A -3030
Leuven BELGIUM.

LEARNING THROUGH DIALOGUE OF LIFE

John and Margaret Eaton

(The Multi-Faith Centre, formerly at Selly Oak Colleges has moved to Harborne, Birmingham. The following meditation on the technique of mosaic-making from their new newsletter offers a parable of the aims and work of inter-religious dialogue).

The art of mosaic as a whole and in its various techniques, offers a parable of the aims and work of the Multi-Faith Centre and gives insights into the divine design for individuals and communities. Pieces of glass or stone are used to create pictures and designs in walls or floors. Each piece has something to contribute to the whole. The artists here cannot hope to control line or colour like the painter, but achieve their unique effect by entering deeply into relationship with their materials and so enabling each piece to achieve its own potential in rich relationship to the others.

When the artists are collecting the pieces of glass or stones they need first to keep like with like before placing them in combination with others.

So too we need to be nurtured in our own tradition before being ready to contribute in a more complex pattern of communities. The diverse religious communities in our cities have found themselves there through many sufferings. Individuals too may know what it is to be broken by circumstances. But, like the artists' stones, they are treasured and prepared for the final design. The breaking brings out hidden beauty; the broken faces best reflect God's light.

Mosaic technique involves first laying the materials in a temporary bed such as plasticine or wet sand. This allows for necessary experimentation, The stones seem to have a life of their own, each influencing the effects of the others. The artists therefore proceed flexibly. Eventually they are satisfied and glue a cloth over the surface of the whole design, which can now be raised. Cement is poured into the reverse, and when this has set the cloth is washed off. Only now is the completed design revealed to full effect.

So we also, fragments of the divine mosaic are broken and shaped, tried in different positions and relationships till we give and receive all possible good. Still the great design is not wholly apparent. It is only after a final unveiling and reversal that it is revealed in perfection.

Mosaics are created to become an integral part of a building. So too the divine mosaic, a pattern of perfect relationships, will become part of the eternal reality.

- end -

Ref. Mosaic No.1. Spring 1989. Harborne Hall, Birmingham. B17 OBD.

NEWSREPORT ON THE WORLD CONFERENCE: MISSION AND EVANGELISM

A well attended meeting on June 23 at the Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools heard a report from five of the official Roman Catholic delegates to the WCC. Conference held at San Antonio, Texas from May 22 to June 1, 1989. Fr. John Mutiso of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity chaired the meeting and introduced the topic. Emerentiana Cooney and Patricia Stowers both of the Marist Missionary Sisters, Jan Lenssen of the Missionaries of Africa and Fr. Shirieda of the Pontifical Council for Inter Religious Dialogue reported on different aspects of the Conference. Reports on a lived experience can be dull affairs. Such was not the case at this session. We were helped to share deeply in the various experiences that went to make up the Conference. The participants were 44% women and there was a high percentage of people below 30 years of age and a considerable representation of people involved at the 'grass-roots' level in situations of mission. Further information on the meeting will be made available.

PEDAGOGY FOR THE NON-POOR

Bob Evans and Alice Frazer Evans conducted a full day workshop on this theme on June 26 at the College of the Divine Word Missionaries. The myth that audiences are not forthcoming for events in Rome at this time of year was proved inaccurate. Sixty five participants took part in this workshop which began at 8.30 am. and finished at 6.15 pm. Further information in a later Bulletin.

COMING EVENTS

COMING SEDOS SEMINARS - REMINDER

1. DECISION MAKING IN INTER-CULTURAL COMMUNITIES. Fratelli Cristiani, November 2, 1989.
2. MISSION FROM VATICAN II INTO THE COMING DECADE AT SEDOS GENERAL ASSEMBLY. Fratelli Cristiani, December 12, 1989.
3. THE THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF LOCAL CHURCH. Villa Cavelletti, March 20 - 24, 1990.

RESUME DE CE NUMERO

William Biernatzki En guise d'introduction au Séminaire sur La décision dans les communautés inter-culturelles, prévu par SEDOS pour le mois de novembre prochain, nous vous proposons un texte à la fois fascinant et interpellant sur la communication inter-culturelle. La plupart des chercheurs qui s'intéressent à ce domaine sont d'avis que la communication a lieu essentiellement aux niveaux plus ou moins inconscients des gestes, de la physionomie, du regard, du ton de voix, de

la force d'expression des sentiments, etc. Cet aspect de chaque culture, dénommé "niveau culturel primaire", définit ce que constitue pour chaque interlocuteur une donnée d'information significative; les messages qui ne rentrent pas dans la logique de ce schéma ne sont simplement pas reçus.

Les chercheurs représentent eux-mêmes des milieux culturels différents et ils apportent des interprétations et des perspectives nouvelles. Plutôt que le modèle classique de communication qui comprend l'envoyeur, le message et le receveur, ils adoptent un modèle convergeant dans lequel des données nouvelles proviennent de chaque interlocuteur, et c'est par le processus d'échange que les participants sont amenés progressivement à se comprendre mutuellement.

L'auteur analyse en outre les facteurs qui interviennent dans l'accueil de nouveaux membres dans une organisation inter-culturelle telle que, par exemple, une communauté religieuse. Tout cela nous semble particulièrement intéressant en vue du Séminaire SEDOS sur la décision dans les communautés inter-culturelles dont SEDOS est justement un exemple. Cette étude pourrait également nous aider à mieux comprendre les problèmes qui se posent quand on veut communiquer le message de l'Évangile au Japon ou dans d'autres pays de l'Asie.

Monica Hellwig Pour rester sur le thème de la culture, Monica Hellwig nous présente cinq aspects positifs du génie américain contemporain. A son avis, il peut exister une réciprocité d'influence réelle entre l'Église et la culture américaine. Pour l'inclure dans le Bulletin de SEDOS, nous avons dû condenser cet article. L'auteur a choisi certains aspects de la culture américaine qu'elle examine plus à fond: le système juridique, la liberté de conscience, la liberté d'expression et d'assemblée, l'expérience contemporaine de la démocratie. Sous ces rubriques, elle examine la censure dans les débats théologiques, les principes de la procédure juridique, le principe de subsidiarité, le discernement des fidèles chrétiens. Ce sont là des questions qui ont aujourd'hui une grande importance pour les missionnaires qui travaillent dans des situations pluri-culturelles.

Laurenti Magesa Le Catholicisme des églises d'Afrique orientale est-il non-inculturé? Tout en reconnaissant l'importance de l'orthodoxie et de la tradition, Laurenti Magesa insiste que pour assumer pleinement leur identité en tant qu'églises locales particulières, les églises de l'Afrique orientale ne peuvent pas se limiter à un simple assentiment intellectuel à une doctrine nébuleuse ou à des déclarations du magistère. Pour que l'inculturation ou l'incarnation de la foi soit authentique, il est essentiel, pour l'auteur, d'examiner à fond le rapport entre les églises locales et la Communion catholique universelle et Rome. Tout en examinant ce rapport, l'auteur traite du rôle des petites communautés chrétiennes en Afrique de l'Est, du ministère dans l'Église et de l'Église comme conscience sociale dans le cadre de la situation politique actuelle en Afrique de l'Est.

Le Synode des Evêques d'Afrique doit avoir lieu prochainement; nous vous présentons un bref historique des synodes basé sur l'expérience de l'Église française.

Enfin, un extrait de MOSAIC, nouvelle revue publiée par le Multi-Faith Center à son nouveau siège de Harbourne, Birmingham.