

Vol 21, No. 9

15th October 1989

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1. NEWS	286
2. A POWER THAT DRAWS: REFLECTIONS ON THE CHURCH AND THE EXERCISE OF POWER Felix Wilfred	287
2. THE FEMININE: THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY Michael Amaladoss, SJ	298
3. AFRICAN - BRAZILIAN RELIGIOSITY: SUDANIC/BANTU/PORTUGUESE SYNCRETISM IN SELECTED CHANTS FROM BRAZIL William W. Megenney	306
4. RESUMES DES ARTICLES	311
5. COMING EVENTS	313
6. "PORANTIM" - A PROJECT FOR INDIANS IN BRAZIL Mgr. Erwin Kräutler	314

IN THIS ISSUE

In villages, towns and cities ever more people and groups are being rendered powerless - socially, politically, economically and culturally. The power they need to conduct a dignified human existence is accumulated in groups, structures and institutions that wield power to oppress, exploit and dehumanize them. These situations of power and powerlessness cannot be a matter of indifference to the Church. The way the Church responds to the powers-that-be in society is intimately linked to the way that authority is exercised within the Church itself. In this context, FELIX WILFRED raises such issues as plurality, sharing of power, participation in decision-making and coercion within the Church. A probing section on the relationship of the Church to systems and structures in society concludes this in-depth reflection which has obvious implications for mission situations.

Men and Women: are they different? MICHAEL AMALADOSS SJ addresses the question of the differentiation of roles in society and the value judgment which privileges male characteristics as superior and more necessary than female. The whole social order is then built up on this premise. After examining the male dominated economic systems, science, technology and politics he looks at the role of religion. Just as true liberation from economic and political oppression comes from the poor, liberation from the masculine domination of culture will come from the

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oppressed feminine. When there is a will to change, inspiration can be drawn from the prophetic dimensions of religion, scriptures can be reinterpreted and the original vision of a new humanity rediscovered.

WILLIAM MEGENNEY'S article has special significance as we approach the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Europeans in Latin America. Current interest is giving rise to an informed historical examination of the events surrounding the "discovery of the Indies", The repercussions of those events touch our own times. The comments of J. PIEPKE and R. NEBEL appearing in this issue help us to understand the African Christian culture popular in Brazil today. The lessons of Afro-Brazilian history show that every community must determine by itself its place in history, in the universal church and in theology. Each has to find its own authentic way. There are lessons here for a new approach to an evangelization which will respect the culture of the "African" and "Indian" peoples of the Americas (see Mgr. Ruiz in SEDOS Bulletin 89/pp. 156-166), a new approach to requests in the U.S.A. for African-American liturgies or rites, and a new approach to liturgies in mission situations in general.

NEWS

PONTIFICIO ISTITUTO MISSIONE ESTERE (PIME). Congratulations to Rev. Franco Cagnasso, elected Superior General of the Pontifical Foreign Missionary Institute at their General Chapter being held in the Philippines.

ANTHROPOLOGY & MISSION

The Society of the Divine Word (SVD) has announced a new service. A selection of papers entitled ANTHROPOLOGY & MISSION is being circulated in an effort to help, by an exchange of ideas, experiences and viewpoints, between missionaries in the field and those involved in the study of anthropology and related sciences at their ANTHROPOS Institute in Sankt Augustin, Germany.

ANTHROPOLOGY & MISSION will appear about four times a year and will deal with specific situations relevant to the missionary task. Each issue will contain an anthropological examination of a mission situation and then a pastoral missiological reflection on it. The papers will be short but precise. The first issue, (12 pages) which we have just received, deals with two situations (1) Afro-Brazilian popular religiosity (which we include in this issue of the Bulletin); (2) the Maasai people of East Africa.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 313.

A POWER THAT DRAWS

REFLECTIONS ON THE CHURCH AND THE EXERCISE OF POWER

Felix Wilfred

*"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth
will draw all people to myself." (Jn 12-32)*

The Context of our Reflections One may dispute whether the massive poverty characterizing India is on the increase or on the way to being eliminated. However, that the critical consciousness of the people continues to grow and intensify is something beyond a shadow of doubt. The people are progressively realizing the intimate nexus between their misery and the power-structures. Illiterate as they may be, the people are, nevertheless, able to identify and name the powers in the village, district, country etc. that preside over their destinies; they keenly perceive the intrigues and machinations of power.

PART I

THE CHURCH UNDER SCRUTINY

The Church finding itself right in the midst of the society and having an institutional identity comes increasingly under the close scrutiny of the critically awakened people. It is true - and it must be stated clearly - that the Church is a mystery and as such, in spite of its visible nature, cannot be reduced to the dimensions of sociology. There is much more to the Church than what appears. And yet, it is a fact that, for many, the strongest temptation to a sociological reduction of the Church arises from the observation of the way power is exercised in the Church. Invoking the truth that the Church is a mystery as a shield to prevent critical scrutiny would be, so to say, a supernatural escapism.

Be that as it may, we witness today the recourse on the part of the laity, religious, priests to fasting, dharna and various forms of boycotting. Without entering into the question whether these are justified in apportioning blame, we can say that they are certainly signs of discontentment about the exercise of power in the Church. They are means employed in order to acquire power which these Christians feel they are deprived of. To reduce these manifestations to a question of obedience would be too simplistic and naive. Indications are that such practices may increase unless the issue is approached in terms of power-relations in the Church and appropriate solutions are evolved at the structural level.

Finally, we observe that in our villages, towns and cities ever more people and groups are being rendered powerless - socially,

politically, economically and culturally. The power they need to conduct a dignified human existence seems to slip through their fingers. It gets accumulated in groups, structures and institutions that wield power to oppress, exploit and dehumanize them. The situations of power and powerlessness cannot be a matter of indifference to the Church. The Church relates in one way or another to the powers that be. The response to power-structures is intimately interlinked to the way authority is exercised within the Church.

It is in this setting that the following reflections are offered. They focus on a few points, and do not pretend to be comprehensive.

DEFINITIONS OF POWER

It is out of the scope of this article to enter into any detailed discussion on the numerous and wide-ranging definitions of power. However, some kind of clarification is in order. In a very basic sense, power can be understood as the capacity or ability to effect change or to influence. When this capacity is in nature we speak of natural powers which can be controlled and channeled through science and technology. More importantly, however, power is the capacity that resides in the world of human beings and manifests itself in the individual, in interpersonal relations, in the relationship between groups, in institutions etc. At the human level, power is operative in social, political, economic, cultural, religious and other realms. When power expresses itself in spite of resistance we speak of coercion and violence.

Power is something wider than authority. Authority presupposes power. We can speak of authority when power is recognized or legitimized. Such recognition could be on the basis of law, constitution, inheritance, experience, tradition, expertise and so on. These provide the authority - individual or institutional - the right and necessary stability to exercise power.

The Ambiguous Nature of Power A second clarification concerns the ambiguous nature of power. On the one hand, power is something positive and human life is unimaginable without it. It is a gift of God which is so very essential for life, for the well-being of people and society. On the other hand, power means also domination, oppression, exploitation, manipulation, death and destruction. In other words, power can be a symbol of evil and selfishness, individual and collective. Power is a source of temptation; it has a deceptive fascination. Another ambiguity of power is that its evils do not cease because it is legitimized or is exercised in the name of God. The fact that power is exercised by sacred persons or institutions does not immunize them against the perversities of power. Nay, some of the most inhuman expressions of power take place because God and the Sacred are invoked in its support. History and experience amply testify to this.

NO COMMUNION WITHOUT POWER

The Church is essentially a communion of persons - fellowship. The Reign of God of which the Church is a sacrament is ultimately nothing but the fullness of fellowship, total freedom, wholeness and salvation.

The communion of persons, however, cannot be disconnected from the question of power and its sharing. Fostering the mystery of communion in the life and mission of the Church demands as a necessary natural basis, the right kind of power-relationship within and without the Church. This alone will lend substance and seriousness to the claim of the Church to be a mystery of communion and a sign and instrument of God's Reign. One could state, for example, that slaves and masters are truly brothers; men and women are equals; there is basic equality among all believers - laity, clergy etc. Such statements would be high-sounding but hollow unless they include in their purview the root question of the power relationships between the concerned groups. The statements would be something like saying that in Hinduism there is no caste distinction since Bhagavadgita says that Brahmins and Sudras are equal. And yet, we know that the reality is far from it. It hides the vast difference in the religious, social and economic power possessed by the two groups.

The Spirit: Source of Power The source of power in the Church is the Spirit. The Spirit endows all believers with God's power as a gift. The power of leadership bestowed by the Spirit on certain believers and recognized as legitimate authority by the community may not dominate over other forms of power, nor may it neutralize, replace or cancel them. It is the whole Church which is empowered by the Spirit so that each one may grow in love, fellowship and freedom, and bear abundant fruits for the life of the world. Any attempt on the part of the leadership to usurp, disregard or cripple the power which the Spirit has bestowed on the believers would amount to a sacrilege. When the believers are thus rendered powerless by the leader, communion in the Church is profoundly disturbed. The leader will, consequently, become the cause of disunity in the Church.

Dialogue is the Redemption of Power The power exercised in the Church by all the believers, each one according to his or her calling needs to be regulated and balanced. The lack of this would inevitably lead to the same kind of conflicts, struggles, pressure-tactics, control and manipulation which are conspicuous in the society around us. Ambiguous and unredeemed power needs to be detoxicated and redeemed to exist in the Church as a true gift of the Spirit. Dialogue is the redemption of power from its ambiguities and the evils it is capable of. Dialogue means the convergence of various forces in the Church to serve the goal of communion both within and without the Church. It is also a check-up whether there is any undue concentration of power in the Church, whether there are unhealthy swellings of power in the body of the Church. Unfeigned and sincere dialogue includes sharing of power. An important form of effective dialogue is, then, participation in decision-making to which each believer brings the power which he or she has received from the Spirit and which enjoys a certain authority in so far as this power is recognized by the community.

POWER - A CONDITION FOR FREEDOM

As there can be no communion without sharing in power so too there can be no true freedom in the Church without power in its positive sense. Power is a necessary condition for the realisation of freedom which is also a gift of the spirit. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom." (1 Cor. 3:17) Imposing servility on others, and

fostering immature dependence is against the Spirit of Christian freedom. Therefore, the exercise of power at all levels should be directed to free people and make them mature. The relationship among the believers in the Church should be a relationship of adults.

Avoiding Paternalism and Maternalism Any paternalism and maternalism in the Church should be carefully avoided since they can turn persons into perpetual infants by stunting their growth. In this context a word must be said about the images frequently used for power-holders in the Church such as 'father', 'mother', 'pastor' etc. In early times, the endearing term 'papa' - father (later evolution from papa to pope) referred to the leader of the local community. This expression was used in an environment of deep communion in the Church and in a mystical sense since the Church leader reflected the care and concern of the heavenly Father. Now it would be simply incorrect and seriously prejudicial to the freedom of the believers if what was said in the form of an image and in a mystical tone were to be converted into a juridical reality, making the leader of the local Church bear all the powers of a father vis à vis his infants. Something similar should be said about our 'mothers' in religious congregations. 'Father' and 'mother' can only be mystical expressions in the Church and on the basis of these appellations no power-holder should expect believers to behave like infants towards him or her. "You are all brethren...And call no man your father on earth, for you have only one Father, who is in heaven." (Mt. 23:8-9)

Similarly the image of pastor in the Johannine sense (Jn. 10:11) is meant to underscore the intimate relationship, the mutual knowledge of the pastor and the sheep. This image in the Church should not be extrapolated and understood as referring to the commanding power represented by the pastor in relation to whom the sheep are mute. Such extrapolated interpretations are dangerous and destructive of freedom in the Church.

Service to the Freedom of Others It is only in an atmosphere of freedom to think, speak out and act that people can become truly human and Christian, as well as open up new possibilities for the mission of the Church. At this historical juncture of the life of the Church in India a lot more freedom is necessary to encounter the challenges of our situation and respond to them meaningfully and creatively. This atmosphere of freedom must mark the relationship between church-leaders and priests, superiors and religious, parish priests and laity, and so on. The immature dependence of the religious, specially women religious on their superiors and the laity on the clergy, should give place to the freedom of adults which will enable them to be innovative in giving expression to the power and gifts which the Spirit has given them. Since human freedom is not an abstraction but incarnate, structural and other means must be constantly developed for its realization. Service to the freedom of others is an important task of the power-holders in the Church. This is very different from the self-understanding of authority as controller of the freedom of others. Authority which is inspired by the idea of control will be sterile and spread all around a lifeless rigour - rigor mortis.

There is, of course, room for fear on the part of a power-holder that freedom could be abused. In this case, he or she should remember that freedom is not the preserve of authority but a gift of the Spirit.

Besides, if freedom is ambiguous and open to abuse, no less ambiguous and open to abuse is the power possessed by those in authority in the Church. The presumption that authority is exercised safely and without risks while freedom is open to danger and risks is wrong. Experience clearly shows this. Any authority in the Church that does not augment (authority - auctoritas - from augere, meaning to increase) the freedom and life of others undermines its own *raison d'etre*.

POWER AND PLURALISM - ANTITHETICAL?

Pluralism is another issue of great importance in the exercise of power in the Church. Power should be oriented towards the creation of ever greater spaces of freedom which will bring in its wake pluralism. But unfortunately the exercise of power in the Church tends towards centralization, the creation of monolithic unity and conformism. Historically there have been several reasons for this. One reason was the absorption into the Church of political models of unity. The danger and threats represented by heresis, schism etc. to which the Church often responded with a narrow understanding of unity, was yet another reason. This contributed to overplaying the role of authority in the Church as the guardian of unity. The equally important duty of authority to foster pluralism was thus left in oblivion. Today the organizational patterns, bureaucracy etc. are contributing to this centralization at all levels.

No Real Unity Without Plurality The theological inspiration behind the monolithic model of unity is the image of the almighty God as one. As God is one so too should everything in the political, social and ecclesiastical realms be reduced to one. The political history of the west amply testifies to how easily the one almighty God could be invoked to legitimize the sovereignty of emperors, kings, dictators, absolute states and every kind of authoritarian rule. Plurality is frowned upon as a threat to power as well as to unity. But we know this kind of monotheism is not christian and it should not be the model for the unity of the Church. The Christian image of God is triune. There can be no real unity which is not at the same time also plurality and diversity. God's power is experienced in the rich and variegated forms of creation. Creation is the reflection of God's one mystery as plural and trinitarian. At a time when totalitarian trends are on the increase in modern life and centralization is becoming a great temptation to the Church, it is necessary for all office-holders in the Church to be inspired by the Trinitarian mystery in their attitude and practice.

The true strength of the Church, parish, diocese, religious congregation does not lie simply in organizational unity. Monolithic unity and centralization are prone to bring out some of the most baneful evil of which power is capable. In its attempt to bring about a monolithic unity, authority can level down the pluriform gifts of God, their beauty and splendour, and make everything plain like the stretch of sand in the desert. Pluralism, like dialogue, is a very necessary means to redeem power from its ambiguities. The genuineness of authority is tested by its ability to promote and foster pluralism in all areas of the life and mission of the Church. Unity is to be sought fundamentally in faith and witness and not in conformism, bureaucracy and centralization.

POWER ROOTED IN TRUTH

For power to serve communion, freedom and pluralism, rootedness in truth is necessary. Authority seeks the conformity of the will of the subject to itself, its policies, decision and decrees. In the eyes of many, the exercise of authority consists precisely in the bending of the will of the subject to the goals determined by authority.

However, it should be noted that besides this relationship of the will to authority, there is another important aspect, namely the relationship of authority to truth. This aspect is often left out of consideration, and even a deliberate dissociation of the two is made. Truth turns out to be uncomfortable and even dangerous to power. This is because, truth is the guardian of freedom. Precisely because of this, power tries to murder truth and create darkness so that it can hijack the will and freedom in the direction it wants. This explains why the autocratic exercise of power, tyranny, totalitarianism, dictatorship etc. require the support of lies and untruth. The penchant of the autocrat to flattery and adulation by a small group of courtiers shows that this individual has enthroned his or her own whims and fancies in the place of truth and begins to take his or her own echo as the voice of truth.

It is absolutely necessary that the exercise of power in the Church be enlightened by truth and follow its path. Power needs to be purified by truth. In the concrete, the relationship between authority in the Church and the subjects should be such that power is not employed simply to bend and subdue the will of the subjects. Power should be directed to truth-finding and in this process the participation of the one who obeys is indispensable. It is the truth that is discovered which should break loose and free the egoistic will both of the power-holder and the subject. In this way, the exercise of power in the Church will be truly an exercise in truth-finding and obedience (obaudire) a listening to the voice of truth. This means that an important quality required of a power-holder in the Church is wisdom and attachment to truth. Administrative skills are not a substitute for wisdom and love of truth. The same attunement to truth and the will to follow it is required also of the subject. Apart from this relationship to truth, authority and obedience will be nothing but domination and servility much the same as we find in society.

Truth comes from the People In the light of what has been said, we are able to understand the role of the Spirit in relation to authority. The Spirit is the one who leads into all truth. The assistance of the Spirit is not for leading the power-holder in the Church to a superior truth concealed from his subjects or believers. Very often, in fact, the subjects - believers are able to see the truth more perspicaciously and promptly. The assistance of the Spirit is required rather to eliminate the forces of egoism, selfishness and short-sightedness which the ambiguity of power brings with it so that one may be able to see the truth in all its splendour. The assistance of the Spirit is derived from listening to the truth that comes from the subjects - believers. This is the truth which can challenge the egoism and selfishness of the power-holder.

Pragmatism and Power Pragmatism or practical expediency is something which separates power and truth which should normally be united and held together. Power-holders in the Church as in society, tend to embrace practical expediency which twists truth out of shape. Another way of eliminating truth from the exercise of power is the claim to 'realism' which is often nothing else than myopia. Anything critical of the exercise of power is labeled as a 'dream' or idealistic. This is a subtle way of keeping truth at a distance for fear of having to face its challenges.

TRANSMISSION OF TRUTH WITHOUT DOMINATION

A word must be added on power in relation to communication of truth in the Church. The human spirit is basically open to truth and goodness. This attunement to truth and moral sense must be the entry-point for any transmission of truth, moral norms, convictions etc. Traditions, behavioural patterns and norms are internalized during the process of socialization. In case of rejection or resistance social control, pressure, sanctions and other punishments are imposed on the individuals by the particular society.

No Coercion If the Church is to be an environment of freedom, truth and communion, all such coercive powers should be absent in transmission of its doctrines, ethical orientations and tradition. Communication should be free of all domineering exercise of power. This is to respect the human person, his or her spirit and conscience. The fact that something is true does not entitle anyone to impose it by force. The exercise of power in the Church should be such that it simply allows the truth to shine forth and let itself convince; it should not be a dominating power over the mind and conscience of the people. The only power is the power of truth. Any undue coercion and violent imposition will distort the mind and conscience of the people and lead to various kinds of psychological disorder and complexes.

It is natural that the process of internalization of doctrines, norms and tenets will lead to a critical questioning of the given. It should not be suppressed by force. Only in this way will what is given cease to be something external and become part of one's self. As a religious agent, the Church has a hold over the conscience of the people through its moral power. Therefore the damages to the conscience of people which a domineering communication can cause will be greater and more serious.

INTERPRETING THE TRADITION

Tradition and past heritage are important for the teaching of the Church and its life. Power in the Church, as elsewhere, finds a great ally in tradition. But the ambiguity of power can reveal itself also in the way that power makes use of tradition. A legitimate concern to be rooted in tradition and let the life of faith be nourished by the received heritage must be distinguished from the abuse of tradition, wittingly and unwittingly, to maintain a particular order of things, power-relations or power-positions. These may have little to do with the orthodoxy of Christian faith and tradition.

Therefore, when a power-holder alleges that a subject is unorthodox, not loyal to faith, or acting against tradition, might we not question whether such an allegation proceeds primarily from a concern with power. One could enquire into it for the sake of truth and this can be done without any lack of respect for legitimate authority. The ambiguous use of tradition warns us also about the necessity of interpreting tradition. Invoking tradition without interpreting it is open to the suspicion that it is intended to legitimize certain power-positions.

PART II

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

After reflecting on the exercise of power in the Church, we should now give some thought to the relationship of the Church to systems and structures of power in society. The ambiguous nature of power is very striking in socio-political, economic and cultural realms. The complexities in which power operates in our society today makes the response of the Church a difficult one. Nevertheless, it is necessary to recognize the crucial importance of a correct attitude and options on the part of the Church to powers that rule the destinies of people from village to the nation. The question of relationship to power is a question regarding the mission of the church since the various activities in which it is involved bear fruit depending upon the stand it adopts vis à vis the powers that be. By taking a firm position enlightened by the Gospel, the Church will be fulfilling its evangelical mission.

The response of the Church to powers of domination cannot be likened to the role of the opposition party to the ruling party. However, by virtue of the communion, truth, freedom and human dignity which it is called to serve, the Church should unambiguously distance itself from any form of oppressive power-structures in the society - landlordism, casteism, etc. There should be no room to suspect that the Church by its commission or omission supports the dominant powers. This, as we know too well from history and present experience, seriously undermines the credibility of the Church. Taking a distance alone is not enough. The Church should present moral resistance to all kinds of domination - resistance which should express itself in concrete actions.

No Compromise with Evil It should be evident from the attitude, policies and options of the Church that it does not compromise with evil and the forces of oppression, death and inhumanity. It is certainly wrong to foster hatred, and the Church should never do it since it is clearly opposed to the Spirit, teaching, life, and death of Jesus. On the other hand, on the basis of the same Gospel, the Church cannot and should not compromise with powers and dominations, much less call this 'reconciliation' and abuse it. But such uncompromising attitude and practice proves very difficult for the Church. For power-wielders in the Church motivated by practical expediency tend to support positively or by their silence the powers-that-be. When it is done unwittingly it reflects the sinful egoism of the power-holder. Thus, we have a situation of unenlightened leadership that has become blind to truth. If power holders in the Church become supporters of oppressive power structures in the society, one important reason could be that they have not had a deep spiritual experience. Only someone who has experienced beauty, truth, freedom and the mystery of human person will

be able to revolt against dreadful situations of lies, unfreedom and inhumanity created by the powers-that-be.

The question of Church's relationship to powers takes the form of a positive support in favour of order. The question of order, however, cannot be divorced from that of justice. The question a power-holder in the Church must ask is whether support for law and order is also a support of justice. There is no gainsaying that both values are very important for human life and societal welfare. But when they come into conflict clear priority must go to justice. The Church should contribute, then, to the creation of an order where justice will be at home.

REJECTING POWER-SUPPORTIVE IDEOLOGIES

An apt response which the Church could give effectively to all powers and dominations is to criticize the ideology which is made use of for the maintenance of unjust socio-political and economic power-systems. These systems are very much in need of the support of ideology. The Church will call into question any unjust and dehumanizing power-system by tearing at its ideological underpinnings. Thus the Church will be following the footsteps of Jesus. Jesus cut the ground from under the power-system maintained by the Sadducees and others by challenging and exploding the legitimation given to it by the religious interpretation of the Pharisees and others. Jesus presented the image of God and this freed the religious systems of all ideological interests and legitimation. It was a serious conflict and confrontation.

Power Seeks to Legitimize Itself In order to legitimize themselves socio-political and economic power systems employ religious symbols and ideas as well as seek the support and blessings of religious authorities. This helps them to obtain the loyalty of the people whom they dominate and oppress. Fascism, Nazism and all such systems have claimed to have God on their side. The racist apartheid regime of South Africa today claims the allegiance of its citizens by appealing to Rom. 13:1-7. The context in which Paul writes these words is conveniently overlooked. They were addressed to those who, in the context of the expectation of an imminent parousia, thought that, since Jesus was their Lord, they were exempted from the obligation to obey secular authorities. We know Paul resisted political power as evidenced by his martyrdom in Rome, and John in the Book of Revelation speaks of the Empire as a harlot and its power as that of a beast (cfr. Rev. 17:1; 13:1).

The Church and especially its power-holders should never give place to turning God into an idol that serves the vested interest of those who wield power. A humble Church, powerless in the eyes of the world is the one which is able to boldly unmask the ideological underpinnings of all systems and resist them. This is what we learn from the early Church. In the course of time, the privileged position it began to occupy in the Roman Empire turned out to be also its weakness. It did not have that powerlessness to be able to challenge the powers-that-be but rather when the Empire began to collapse through Barbarian invasions, the Church began to take over its functions.

The unmasking of the ideological underpinnings of power and domination should not be done in a spirit of self-righteousness. For inspite

of grace and the power of the Spirit operative in the Church, its members are sinful. Sinfulness is often most conspicuous in the way power is exercised. Therefore the Church should look at itself and ask whether the ideological camouflage it denounces is not also present in the exercise of power within its precincts. A prophetic challenge to powers and dominations will be credible only when the Church examines whether the ideological rust that corrodes every power has not come upon it too. The failure on the part of the Church to make a prophetic critique of unjust power-structures could be a sign that such a malady has indeed infected the power-holders in the Church.

EMPOWERING THE POWERLESS

The Church whose mission it is to preach the Good News to the poor in the footsteps of Christ (cf Lk. 4:18-19) is also obliged to empower them by virtue of the same mission. The Church's commitment to the defence of human rights and dignity is a way of empowering the victims of power in our society. However today, affirmation of human rights alone does not help. Without power, justice, equality and freedom remain mere fictitious rights. For these rights to be effective and operative, it is necessary that they be accompanied by power in a positive sense. To understand this, it is enough to think of, for example, how in our Indian society today even with the recognition of equality of all before the law, a poor innocent man can be convicted and a rich landlord could be acquitted of his crime simply because the former has no social and economic power to employ a lawyer who can argue his case while the latter has. The upholding of the human rights and dignity of the powerless, 'the least' (Mt 25:40-45) of our brothers and sisters requires that they be empowered.

Empowering the powerless means that the Church support the solidarity of the 'least', the oppressed. The coming together of the oppressed in solidarity is necessary to acquire power. Only in this way freedom can be something concrete and effective. The marginalized in our society have the right not to let themselves be manipulated by powers and dominations. Contributing to the solidarity of powerless groups is essential for a Church that is committed to human rights and dignity.

Finally the Church cannot limit itself to addressing the powers and dominations. It does not suffice that the Church appeals to the powerful to share their power with powerless groups. It is important today that the Church addresses the oppressed and the victims of power to commit themselves to the cause of justice and to challenge the unjust power systems. Is it not through the ardent yearning of the poor for justice, peace and freedom and their commitment to the realization of these, that the Reign of God will dawn for all?

A Power that Draws There can be two ways of exercising power. Power can be employed to dominate, to prevail over and to conquer. There is another way power can be exercised. It is not by imposing and dominating but by drawing. In this case power is not something exterior, but interior. By its inner truth and beauty power is able to attract others to itself like a magnet. It is this kind of power which draws that must be operative in the Church and in our society. "When I am lifted up from the earth. I will draw all people to myself". (Jn 12:32) This approach to power and truth has a lot of

implications for the practice of evangelization, magisterium etc..

The cross from which Jesus draws all people is a model of the power of powerlessness for the Church. It is a powerlessness that redeems the world, lets life blossom, truth flourish and freedom bear fruit. A penitent and converted Peter could tell the lame man at the door of the temple "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth walk". "And he took him by the right hand and raised him up." (Acts 3:6-7) If we, the Church, are not able to say today to the millions of people rendered powerless and lame in our societies 'Stand up and walk', as Peter did, it is because, unlike him, we have gold and silver, and plenty indeed. It is the gold and silver of our power, money, influence, institutions and so on. We can become a Church of hope, an empowering Church by learning to stand powerlessly at the foot of the cross - the cross on which today hang our powerless brothers and sisters.

- end -

Ref. Jeevadhara: A Journal of Christian Reflection
Vol. XIX (1989) pp. 57-71

THE FEMININE: THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

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I find this title intriguing, but at the same time challenging. In the context of this Seminar which is probing the question "Are the Religions Masculine-centred"? "Are They Afraid of the Feminine"? the positive affirmation in the title seems very hopeful. It is in the horizon of this hope for the future of humanity that I would like to place my exploration of the role of the feminine for the future of our world. I would like to show that the feminine need not be a source of fear, as the theme of the seminar speculates. On the contrary, the feminine can be a source of hope and even of prophecy. The focus of my reflections will be socio-cultural and not strictly religious. Religion has no meaning in itself: it is an element in life and community and cannot be understood or judged apart from them. I am not interested so much in talking about the tense relationship between man and woman, their equality, complementarity or reciprocity, taken in an isolated manner. I am rather interested in asking what men and women can do together for the future of humanity; how can they collaborate in a common commitment. Speaking of the masculine and the feminine as principles helps a certain abstract clarity of analysis. As C.J. Jung pointed out, these are principles that are found in varying proportions in every human person, man or woman. But it is also true that cultural stereotypes have caused the one-sided growth of the masculine in men and the feminine in women in contemporary society.

MAN AND WOMAN: ARE THEY DIFFERENT?

The difference between man and woman is obviously based on sex. From the point of view of their inter-relationship, this biological difference finds its consequences and development in physical, psychological and relational characteristics. For instance, it may not be true that physically man is stronger than woman, but that man and woman seem to have different kinds of strengths: man seems more agile, suitable for certain activities like hunting, etc. while woman has a more basic kind of stamina that makes her live longer. This difference will have its psychological consequences. I am not interested here in developing a typology; I wish only to point to a basic difference. While affirming the difference it may be difficult to categorise it concretely since it seems difficult to distinguish between what is natural and what is cultural in contemporary awareness and behaviour patterns. It seems better to take each individual, man or woman, as he or she is, without any typological characterization and a priori value judgement. But one must be aware of the difference and its possible consequences, even if it is not necessary to spell them out in abstract, general terms. Sex then will become one more element among others, alongside physical heredity, special natural gifts, culture, history, family, education, economic status, opportunities, relationships, etc. that contribute to the determination of the identity of a person. All these factors have an influence, but even this cannot be typed since the concrete outcome depends on the interaction of an individual person with these factors.

One important variant among individuals will be their liberty. The possibilities are infinite. At this level people today prefer to speak of reciprocity, rather than of complementarity - equality in dignity is always supposed.

Family Context: Within the context of the family, man and woman do have different roles with regard to the child and its upbringing and this has consequences for the whole family. There are different ways of relating to life, to the other, to love, to caring, to work, to community. Even at this level, I am simply affirming a difference without subscribing to the current cultural role models. With regard to the family, I think one can affirm a complementarity of woman and man as mother and father with reference to the child, though the concrete realization of this complementarity may well vary, not only from culture to culture, but even from family to family - also depending on economic and work conditions.

The Differentiation of Roles in Society: Once we move out of this sphere of the family, at other levels of culture, society, politics and religion (spirituality), man and woman are equally human and seem to have basically the same gifts. The proportion might vary, but not according to sex. For instance, women are not less intelligent and more emotional than men. Though the sexual differentiation we spoke of above might determine the attitude to and the ways of using these gifts I think that a basic equality is being affirmed more and more today. People may be more or less intelligent with regard to a particular task, but sex is not the determining factor of the difference. Women are not physically weaker, but they seem to have a different kind of strength compared to men. The real question is whether their sexual and family roles, which cannot be denied or undervalued, should become a pattern, for men and women, that determines their roles in other dimensions of life. I think it should not.

But as a matter of fact, culture and history have sharply differentiated role differences between man and woman, not only in the home but also in society. Stereotypes have been created and they are interiorized by children almost from birth. Moreover, culture and history have also favoured the masculine over the feminine so that we have today male-dominated cultures and societies. All of us know these stereotypes. For instance, man is supposed to be more intellectual, rational, active, aggressive, possessive, dominant, etc. On the contrary, woman is supposed to be more emotional, intuitive, passive, accepting, self-sacrificing, submissive, etc. The real problem in contemporary society is not only the stereotype differentiation, but the value judgement which privileges the male characteristics as superior and more necessary. The whole social order is then built up on this premise. Even a superficial analysis of the various dimensions of society shows how this value judgement has affected life in this world.

Whether we like these stereotypes or not, there is no doubt that life, society and culture are governed by them. So in the following pages, if I speak of the masculine and the feminine, I take them in this cultural-historical sense of what is and not what it ought to or what could be. As a matter of fact I think that the situation should change. But in the meantime, we have to speak of things as they are.

A MALE DOMINATED SOCIETY?

Let us make a very quick overview of the various dimensions of life to see what role the masculine and the feminine play in it. As we are in Europe, it is better to concentrate our attention on the European scene. In so far as European culture is dominant in the world today, this would apply to the whole world, though this domination has not always gone uncontested.

Philosophy In this field, for instance, the emphasis has been on reason. A conceptual approach that cuts up reality into universal concepts is dominant. A dichotomous point of view that separates spirit from matter, time from eternity, nature from the supernatural has promoted an exclusive concentration on the phenomenal world. The opposite of this would be a wholistic approach to reality and a greater use of symbol and imagination in the way we think of life and the world. A symbolic approach would 'seize' reality in a way that a merely rational-conceptual approach cannot, even if this approach has its uses in limited circumstances.

Science and Technology At this level, the rational conceptual approach is further narrowed down by a materialistic perspective. Only what can be measured and experimented upon is taken seriously as an object of knowledge: one can really know only what one can manipulate. No wonder then that this spirit of manipulation and domination characterizes contemporary science. The desire is not only to know but to control. One seeks to discover nature's laws not to live in conformity with them or to use nature in conformity with its own inner being, but to dominate it and exploit it for human benefit. Technology is the means devised to facilitate this control. Science itself, as the desire to know becomes subordinated to technology as the tendency to control and exploit: science becomes the slave of technology. Thus we have the strange consequence, not only of people exploiting nature, but of people becoming the slaves of the machine. These developments in the natural and physical sciences have also had their impact in the human and social sciences. Everything has to be measured - even intelligence. Surveys are constantly made. Information and the media are manipulated for mass deception and control. The overall tendency is, not only to know and to use, but to exploit and to control. How far is this development from a basic humanism where everything is a means to promote a better and a more humane life! On the contrary, means have become ends.

Economic System The result of technology developing means of exploitation is seen in the increase of production. Production, of course, can be used to meet people's needs, to feed the hungry, to heal the sick, to facilitate exchange, to protect against natural calamities. But production is being used as a means of self-affirmation and self-aggrandizement. Consumerism becomes an end in itself. Consumerism is promoted in order to facilitate the accumulation of wealth promoting further consumerism. The needs of such production lead to liberal capitalism or the unbridled accumulation of capital. Thus we have an economic system that is based on the selfishness of individuals and groups, even of nations. No one thinks of the other, except as an object to use. There is no spirit of sharing, no sense of the common good, except as collective selfishness.

Technological Society In such a society, egoism, individualism competition, discrimination, and hierarchy as power are more important values of social construction than community, equality, fraternity and justice, though one may be constantly taking about these values. Where one may be able to understand and handle hierarchy of status, especially if it is linked to differentiation of social roles, hierarchy of power becomes oppressive. And if power and status combine together then we have absolute oppression.

Politics In a society based on competition, politics can only be thought of in terms of power and control. One may talk of service, participation, rights and responsibilities. But these are accessible only to the powerful. The social organization is based on power and violence. One can think of authority as service. But power can only impose itself and be violent. Power and control require boundaries - balance of power, spheres of influence, etc.

We see that at every level of society and culture, it is the male stereotype, characterized as rational, active, aggressive, possessive, power-seeking, that is dominant. There is no thought of the other, of sharing, of community, of service, of love. This masculine-dominated society is leading humanity to disaster. Science and technology are destroying nature, almost in an irreparable manner. In league with them, secularization and politics are destroying human beings, either from the outside through war and violence or from the inside through alienation and drugs.

WHY MASCULINE DOMINATION?

What could be the cause of this pervasive masculine domination in all the spheres of life? I think that in the beginning - and even today - people constructed community, not on the affirmation of identity and on difference seen as pluralism, but on difference seen as opposition. Boundaries had to be defined and defended. The other is the enemy. This may have been especially so in nomadic groups, because they tended to see other groups, not as coexistent, but as competitive. Social organization then becomes self-defensive, centered on "warriors", who tend to be males. Political structures, therefore, are constructed around the army. Violence becomes the basis of power. Violence directed against the outsider calls forth also violence within the group, but this is seen as control and discipline. Every other activity of the group is organized around this political centre. Politics, instead of being at the service of the community, controls every other field of activity of the community. Thus it comes to influence the whole culture of the community. When a community settles down to a more sedentary life, this domination of the 'fighters' may be contested by the 'wise men'. The Brahmins (priests and scholars) try to control the Kshatriyas (soldiers). They may have a certain success at a cultural level for a certain time. But at the level of real life, the army never seems to lose its central role. The situation does not seem to be different even today, if we consider the amount that each country is ready to spend on arms: the more uncertain its identity, the more powerful is its army. Today perhaps the fight is not so much for territory as for spheres of influence and commercial markets. The modern phenomenon of secularization seems to be reducing any pretensions that culture or religion had to dominate economics or politics.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION

The role of religion with regard to culture is always ambiguous. On the one hand, especially as revelation, it has a prophetic stream, calling for conversion, proposing a new vision for the future and pointing to the transcendent. On the other hand, there is a tendency to legitimize existing structures and to legislate for life here and now in the world, even if it involves a compromise with the high ideals. One has only to compare the Prophets and the Wisdom sections with the Historical and Legal sections in the Bible. With reference to the roles of man and woman, all religions have an ideal of harmony, equality and wholeness. But as this religious vision gets inculturated in a particular culture and history, it becomes legitimating in some way. This tendency is seen, not only as a later development, but already in the foundational period of the formation of the Scriptures.

The Early Church Thus, for instance, in Christianity contemporary exegeses point out how in the Pauline corpus we see a movement from the high ideals of there being no difference between the Jew and the Greek, between man and woman, between the slave and the free because all are equal in the risen Christ. (Gal. 3, 28; cf. 1 Cor. 12, 12-13; Col. 3, 9-11) to the practical rules of asking women to cover their heads (1 Cor. 11, 2-16) or of forbidding them to speak in the Christian assembly. (1 Cor. 14, 34-35) We may also see in this a move from a Church that was expecting the end any time to a Church that is resigned to continued existence in the world and therefore cannot ignore the existing socio-cultural structures with regard to women, slaves, etc. Cultural attitudes may also condition, not only the memory that reports selectively past events and conditions, but also their interpretation by successive generations of readers. Thus contemporary exegeses have shown how the possible roles played by women in the early Church have either gone unreported or have been misread by succeeding generations.

Other Religions We see similar examples in other religions too. Thus, in Hinduism, the breadth of reflection shown in the Upanishadic reflection, the affirmation of the importance of the feminine principle - Shakti or power - in God, Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer and the equality affirmed in all the reform and Bhakti (loving devotion) movements is not seen in the law books of Manu and in the practical ritual and spiritual guidelines. The Buddha founded monasteries for both men and women, but the women's branch seems slowly to wither away, without ever completely disappearing. Taoism relativises the masculine-feminine difference in relation to the unknowable Absolute, while affirming their active complementarity in nature and life as Yin/Yang. But Confucius proposes a very masculine-centred legal system.

Prophetic/Mystic Paradigm Looking globally at the world religions we can also note a difference between what historians of religions classify as either prophetic or mystic religions. The prophetic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam - are based on the idea of an election, a setting apart, that lays down very clear and sharp community boundaries. They are also more institutional and very much tied to a culture. They do not only witness to a faith, but seem to privilege a particular institutional organizational structure. The mystical religions, on the contrary, are not 'inculturated' in

the same way and seem to have open boundaries. It is worth exploring the cultural foundations of the prophetic/mystic paradigm. It is common to characterize 'western' cultures as extrovert, active, aggressive, down-to-earth, materialistic and the 'orient' as introvert, passive, contemplative, other-worldly, spiritual. This is obviously a stereotype, but one that has affected cultural and historical development. One could argue that it is this cultural orientation that has affected the religions that had their origin in that cultural area rather than the religions giving rise to such cultural attitudes. For instance, Buddhism has inculturated itself easily wherever it spread in Asia, the 'prophetic' religions have tried to spread not only the 'faith', but also a culture and institutions.

We can observe the same tension, even within the Church, between institution and charism, between Christ-centred and Spirit-centred approaches to ritual and ecclesiastical organization and between the Latin West and the Orthodox East.

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

In the field of spirituality, this masculine-feminine differentiation is at once more clear and also more subtle. At a popular level women are reputed to be more religious, at least with regard to the performance of rites, visits to sacred places, etc. At a higher level, most religions have a tradition of spousal mysticism, God being the Bridegroom and the human person the bride. This might make it look as if spirituality itself is characterized as feminine. Historically and culturally we find both tendencies represented in most religious traditions. The following is a schematic illustration of the contrasts.

<u>Masculine</u>	<u>Feminine</u>
Extrovert/action	Interiority/contemplation
Dynamism	Withdrawal
Asceticism/power	Abandonment/poverty
Violent conflict	Non-violent force
Knowledge/meditation	Love/devotion
<u>Jnana</u> (gnosis)	<u>Bhakti</u> (agape)
Prophetic/aggressive	Mystic/passive
Missionary	Witness
Order/structure	Spontaneity/liberty
Rites/organization	Celebration/community
Dualism	Harmony
Word	Symbol
Christ-centered	Spirit-centered
Western (?)	Eastern (?)

All schemes tend to be simplistic. But a certain pattern is evident. Though both tendencies are found everywhere, it is customary to consider the feminine pole more 'spiritual'. One also thinks that the masculine pole is dominant in the West, while the feminine pole is dominant in the East: this seems to be one reason to identify the Orient as more spiritual. One tends to assign the 'religious' and the 'sanyasis' (world-renouncers) to the contemplative pole, while the laity

are more at the active pole. Religious traditions have always tried to integrate the two poles in a sort of harmony. Thus we have in Christian tradition, the goal of St. Ignatius of Loyola of being "contemplative in action"; in the Hindu tradition, the attempt of the Bhagavad Gita to promote Nishkama Karma (action without attachment to its fruit); and in the Buddhist tradition, compassionate action.

Inculturated Religion This typology raises a number of interesting and significant questions. On the one hand, inculturated religion and its structures seem to share in the masculine dominance that characterize all cultures. On the other hand, in all the religions the feminine pole seems to have the privileged place as the more spiritual one. This feminine pole, in the form of world-renouncing groups has always prophetically challenged the more masculine dominated culture and society.

The attitude of religion to the masculine-feminine tension is very complex. Religion as an institution can only survive if it conforms to the prevailing cultural trends. But within religion there is an element of prophecy that keeps questioning the accepted worldviews, attitudes and structures. This is the reason that feminists are not advocating the overthrow of religions and their scriptures, but are seeking to rediscover their origins and reinterpret their symbolic expression in the Scriptures and institutions. It is from this point of view that studies on the motherhood of God, the equality of man and woman in creation and the forgotten or suppressed roles of women in early Christian communities are interesting. They would certainly lead to a more balanced worldview.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

In so far as we can distinguish between religion and culture, our focus should be on the transformation of the cultural structures as well as religious structures in so far they are affected by a particular culture. The inspiration and motivation for such change will come from religion itself and its primordial vision of a harmonious new humanity of equal participants in the life of God. But the real force for change must come from the people, particularly women: from the people, because they realize the violence and the destruction to which the domination of the masculine has led our world; from the women, because the subjugation of the feminine manifests itself particularly in the oppression of the feminine. Just as true liberation from economic and political oppression comes from the poor, liberation from the masculine domination of culture will come from the oppressed feminine. When there is a will to change, inspiration can be drawn from the prophetic dimensions of religion, scriptures can be reinterpreted and the original vision of a new humanity rediscovered. All religions provide an alternative to the forces that promote oppression in the world. Hinduism speaks of selfless and disinterested service. Buddhism promotes renunciation and compassion. Christianity proposes love and non-violence symbolised by the Cross. Islam demands total surrender to the justice of God.

Promoting a True Harmony Our aim is not to condemn the masculine and exalt unilaterally the feminine, but rather to promote a true harmony. There cannot be love without action, sharing without production, communion without relationship, creativity without

form and order. But we must produce before we can share; have structures for communion, not for power and domination; discover nature's laws, not to exploit them, but to live in harmony with them; seek to have in order to be; have authority for service, not for power; seek to know in order to love and serve; laws to protect the spirit and creativity and not to suppress them. Harmony between the masculine and the feminine does not mean that we can reach a state of perfect peace. That would be death. We should rather look for a continuing dialectic, a state of dynamic tension. This state is well symbolized in the celebrated Chinese image of the Yin/Yang. It is a continuous movement. This tension is not seen as a conflict only because both poles of tension tend to a dynamic equilibrium.

The Feminine in Every Dimension of Life The focus of the liberation movement should not be narrowed down to equality for women in economics and politics. As I have tried to show above, the domination of the masculine has its impact in every dimension of life. Therefore the feminine must be made present in each of those dimensions so that we move towards an equilibrium. It is significant, for instance, that there is a growing realization of the close connection between the ecological and the women's movement. While we should move away from stereotypes that make the earth feminine in some way, we should also realize that a commitment to the liberation of the feminine today, if it is consistent, is also a commitment to the protection of the environment, to life, to peace, to a world free of arms and drugs, to community that respects the identity of each one and so is pluralistic. The focus is therefore nothing short of the Reign of God, a new heaven and a new earth for a new humanity.

Conclusion: Quest for Liberation This is the ideal. But the reality is a world that is masculine dominated, where the feminine is oppressed. In the quest for liberation all - men and women - have a role to play. Even the feminine as a principle is not the exclusive possession of women. But in the contemporary cultural situation with its stereotypes the women are the privileged bearers of the feminine. As such they are also oppressed culturally. They need liberation, not to become like men, but to participate in the life and work of the community, bringing to it their specific contribution. They have a special prophetic role, not only of creating a new awareness, but also of promoting a peoples' movement. I am not here elaborating on the ways in which such awareness and participation could be promoted, but limiting myself to a socio-cultural analysis.

Authentic religion need not be afraid of such a woman: she is not an object of fear, but a bearer of hope and prophecy. A Christian will see in Mary a model of this new woman: not only Mary in Nazareth or Bethlehem, but Mary on Calvary - Mary, who not only hears the Word of God and treasures it in her heart (Luke 2,51), but does it. (Luke 8,21)

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Ref. Talk given by Michael Amaladoss, SJ. Assisi, August, 1989.

AFRICAN - BRAZILIAN RELIGIOSITY

SUDANIC/BANTU/PORTUGUESE SYNCRETISM IN SELECTED CHANTS

FROM BRAZILIAN UMBANDA AND CANDOMBLE

William W. Megenney

I. Anthropological Part (J.G. Piepke)

1. Summary

The liturgical chants of Brazilian syncretism examined here represent a mixture of African-religious heritage and Christian thoughts of the colonial period. They are taken from the publication: *Cantigas de Orixás: Pontos Cantados, Pontos riscados. Rio de Janeiro: Edições Crença*. The language, too, shows considerable African influences, which might be better clarified in the near future by John T. Schneider's *A Dictionary and Database on African Lexical Influences in Brazil*. With this work it will be possible to understand more exactly the spread of Sudanic and Bantu languages in Brazil and Latin America and to get a clearer idea of the slave trade during the colonial period.

African-Christian syncretism refers to the persistent ability of native African religious thought and practice to survive under the guise of Christian popular religion, even under strong pressure from Christian masters. The African pantheon merged with the Catholic world of saints, so that the new religion can be understood in a double sense: Oxalá is identified with Jesus Christ, Iansã with St. Barbara, Iemanjá with Mary.

The Bantu tribes came mainly from Angola, Zaire, Cabinda, Benguela and Mozambique, while the Sudanic tribes include the West African Yoruba (Nagô in Brazil), Ewe (Gêgê in Brazil) and Fante-Ashante (also called Mina in Brazil). Furthermore some Islamic Sudanic peoples also reached the New World, such as the Hausa, Peul/Fulah, Mandinge and Tapa/Nupe. In the development of the religious cult the Yoruba heritage dominated; it merged in five subsequent stages with elements of other people and with native Indians. So developed the cults of Candomblé, of Pajelança (Candomblé de caboclo), of Catimbó, of Macumba and Umbanda/Quimbanda. The Umbanda in its modern form took over elements of European kardecism/spiritism and spread mainly among the white middle class (Umbanda de Branco).

One half of the linguistically examined chants has their origins in the Candomblé, which has taken over Sudanic elements to a greater extent; the other half comes from the Umbanda, which shows more Bantu influences. The vocabulary and the linguistic forms do not belong to colloquial speech but are part of a secretly handed down sacral language, which today largely cannot be understood even by its users and which has disappeared from its original African home. The Portuguese words in the chants represent a close interpretation of the African original, so that from them a reference back to the original language is possible. The dominance of Portuguese in the Umbanda chants leads to the conclusion that in Umbanda the Yoruba influence is weaker than in Candomblé.

Two examples of the chants must suffice:

Cantigas de Oxalá (Candomblé)

Odorê, odorê,
Mamanjú d'Oxaguian
Mamanjú dorí ketê
Mamanjú d'Oxaguian
Mamanjú dorí ketê.

Know the (humble) Lamb of God,
The angel-mother of the Son of God,
The angel-mother on the back of a donkey,
The angel-mother of the Son of God,
The angel-mother on the back of a donkey.

E filá la eu

She wearing a cap on [her head] at this
time [during this season],

Ex, ebe um filá

[Her] spirit blesses [as she wears] her cap
[remembering the importance to the
initiates of dressing up as the orixás for
the ceremonies].

E filá la eu

Ex, ebe um filá.

Filá, filá lá lá ô,
Ep, eu eu
Filá, filá lá lá ô (bis)

A cap on at this time,
Ah, at this time,
A cap on at this time.

Elajô um afefê (bis)

The orixá of the wind [appears] with force
and zeal,

Ajocô pra Babá
Temí á un kolofê (bis)

A place to sit for the Father,
May the lofty Spirit, who is full of life
(who goes with life), bless you.

Cantigas de Omulu (Umbanda)

Omulu aiê, atotô,
É um Orixá,
Pede que ele dá, atotô,
Ele é Orixá.

Omulu unceasing, strong,
He is an orixá,
Ask for and he will give you, strong,
He is orixá.

Meu pai Oxalá,
Meu Deus, venha me valer (bis),
Meu velho Atotô,
Omulu, Baluaié (bis).

My father Oxalá,
My God, come to help me,
My old Strong,
Omulu, Obaluaié [the orixá of smallpox].

Quê, querê, quê, ô ganga,
Pisa na macumba de ganga.
Quê, querê, quê quê, ô ganga,
Saravá Seu Omulu, qui é ganga.

Let us shout and proclaim Ganga, the Chief,
Appear in the cult of the Chief.
Let us shout and proclaim the Chief,
Salute Sir Omulu, who is the supreme
Chief!

João Pepê,
Saravá sua té (bis).

John Pepê,
Salute for you!

2. Anthropologically relevant aspects

Religious patterns show the ability to last for centuries. Even considerable cultural and religious upheavals, such as those created by Negro slavery in America, cannot obscure the fact that a religious heritage can survive for centuries even under the greatest suppression.

Religion is deeply linked to the emotional dispositions of people. Thus native emotions cannot be suppressed or re-educated by culturally prescribed new values. This is seen in the simple and repetitious vocabulary of the chants, which become relevant not so much by their content as by the accompanying rhythm of the drums, by the simple, psalmodic melody, and by the dances leading to trance. This becomes more evident by the fact that today the significance of the texts is practically unknown.

Religion and religious practices (the cult) are basic elements of the ethnic affirmation of identity. Despite the total destruction of native African social and family structures caused by the slave owners in the New World, African religious elements continued to provide a means of identity for these people.

3. Transfer to another cultural-religious context

The persisting ability of native religious ideas and practices can be applied to all religions. Therefore the religious tradition of a nation should be taken seriously, properly recorded, and analysed.

The anchoring of religious traditions in emotions shows the impossibility of changing "primitive" practices and ideas in a rational way. A rational catechesis will not change deep-seated emotional patterns.

The rooting of identity in religion has to be seriously considered. Any change in religion and in its practices will be necessarily followed by a loss of identity for affected persons and communities. Loss of identity also means loss of social balance, loss of personal and social values, as well as loss of harmonious integration into the cosmic framework of the world.

4. Literature for further reading

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II. Missiological Part (Richard Nebel)

1. Connection of ethnological and pastoral aspects

Christian and African cultural and religious traditions exist partly side-by-side in the Afro-Brazilian culture, partly they are mixed in a diversity of forms and contents. Besides language and way of life, it is especially the popular religion of Afro-Brazilian communities which shows the influences of the Christian tradition coming from Portugal and its enrichment by the manifold heritage of Bantu, Sudanic and other African peoples. This cultural and religious diversity determines the worldview and the religious practices (prayer, dancing, cult, devotion, worship) seen, for example, in the Afro-Brazilian context of Umbanda and Candomblé. An Afro-Christian theology and pastoral practice must understand the importance of the gospel within the specific context of Brazil; it must interpret and articulate this fact and realize it in praxis. For this a change in perspective will be necessary, giving the anthropological and ethnological realities of the Afro-Brazilian cultures precedence over theological ones. Important are the cultural links of religious experiences, which are affected by one's worldview. Finally criteria have to be developed for an authentic inculturation in Afro-Brazil. This can be done by means of a dialectic relationship between the normativeness of the gospel and the necessity of integration or transculturation of religious elements, leading to a pluralistic, multi-cultural Church of Brazil.

2. Pastorally relevant aspects

The liturgical chants originating from Umbanda and Candomblé, the so-called "Cantigas" de Oxalá, de Omulu, de Obaluaiê, de Nanã Buruquê, de Xangô, show, as far as form and contents are concerned, that African religious heritage (interspersed with Christian influences) is still alive and well among certain classes in today's Brazil. The Christian God and saints of the church have become africanized; African spirits and gods have become christianized. These manifest themselves under different names, forms and functions in both male and female aspects: e.g. the supreme God Oxalá, father and creator of the world, also appears as Oxaguian (Jesus Christ, Senhor do Bomfim); the "great God" Ganga Zomba and Xangô (also St. John), god of thunder and lightning; the god of rain Nan Burukú; Omulu (St. Lazarus), god of illnesses and epidemics and Obaluaiê (St. Roque and St. Lazarus); the goddesses Yemanjá (St. Mary), Mamanjú (angel-mother Mary), Yansã (St. Barbara); the goddess of fertility Lembá and Nana (St. Ann, Senhora Santana), the eldest of the spirits and gods and their grandmother. The result of such a fusion of different religious traditions is a misunderstanding of the Christian concept of God and a lapse into a kind of polytheism. On the other hand we learn from the Cantigas' "image of God" the consciousness of "mystic neighbourhood" and a differentiated unity of God and the world, of nature and the supernatural, of the holy and the profane, which offer excellent connecting links for contextual Christian pastoral work. Furthermore, the immense wealth of Afro-Brazilian symbolism, spirituality, the feeling of community between the living and the dead, salvation as a public and social event, combined with the vision of a new society and a new creation, is amazing. The "translation" of this Afro-Brazilian religious experience is an interpretation of the Christian message within the socio-cultural context of the Brazilian people, making understandable and relevant the Christian message to Brazilians.

3. Guidelines for transformation to another cultural context

Every people, every country reflects its own historical, cultural, religious, and pastoral situation. Neither "assimilation" (towards the cultures of the former colonial masters) nor the return to the original autochthonous (here: African) cultures is possible. A culture must develop in accordance with its own nature and history. The lessons of Afro-Brazilian history show that every community must determine by itself its place in history, in the universal church, and in theology, without relying on existing samples. Each has to find - as in the case of Afro-Brazilian communities - its own authentic way. An authentic pastoral liturgy, for example, should be able to take as a guide the riches of popular religion and culture and to treasure these as the contributions of each people to Christian liturgy (cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 4th December 1988, No. 18).

4. Suggestions for further missiological reflection

These "Cantigas" - chants, stories, myths - render to the Afro-Christian faithful of Brazil the outlines of the shadow and the impenetrability of the secret, in short: their identity (compare similar aspects in the "Cantares Mexicanos", such toltec-aztec-Christian chants within a different cultural context of early-colonial New-Spain [Mexico]). They give remarkable incentives for pastoral work and evangelization in the light of a "theology of religions", of a "communio-theology": *Mysterium, Communio, Missio* as well as in the light of a non-verbal theology (still to be elaborated), found in the popular religion of the Afro-Brazilians. There remain questions regarding a *communicatio in sacris*, a participation in public worship, their significance within multi-religious society and their implications for evangelization, inter-religious dialogue and ecumenism. The Cantigas prove to be an important source for theologizing within the Afro-Brazilian world. They can make important contributions to contextual Afro-Christian theology, christology, pneumatology, mariology, ecclesiology, and soteriology.

5. Literature for further reading

- Associação Eumênica de Teólogos do Terceiro Mundo (ed.)
1986 Identidade Negra e Religião. Consulta Sobre Cultura Negra e Teologia na América Latina. São Paulo.
- Berner, Ulrich
1979 Der Begriff "Synkretismus" - ein Instrument historischer Erkenntnis? *Saeculum* 30: 68-85.
- Brandão, Carlos R. (et al.)
1986 Inculturação e Libertação (Semana de Estudos Teológicos CNBB/CIMI). São Paulo.
- Suess, Günter Paulo
1978 Volkskatholizismus in Brasilien. München-Mainz.
- Nebel, Richard
1986 Concepciones Teológicas y Filosóficas de los Tlaminime en la Cultura Náhuatl: Hacia una Teología Liberadora. *Logos (México)* 14.42: 41-61.

NEWS

This is a valuable service. We will send one copy of each issue of ANTHROPOLOGY & MISSION to SEDOS Members until the end of 1990. The service will then be assessed and evaluated at the 1990 SEDOS General Assembly. The SVD Generalate has kindly agreed to supply copies for distribution during this period.

PORANTIM: A PROJECT OF THE INDIAN

MISSIONARY COUNCIL (CIMI) OF THE BRAZILIAN BISHOPS

In this SEDOS Bulletin is an appeal from Mgr. Erwin Kräutler, Bishop of Xingu and President of CIMI, Brazil. The Bishop explains the launching of an international edition of their monthly newspaper "PORANTIM" in defence of the rights of Indians. Although protected by law for the first time in the recent Constitution of Brazil promulgated in 1988 the situation of the Indians has deteriorated, writes the Bishop. The invasion of gold-diggers, timber traders, big landowners and mining companies, coupled with the mammoth projects of the government threaten the Indians with genocide.

Copies of the Bishop's letter are available also in Italian at SEDOS Secretariat. A form-letter is enclosed which readers may use to request further information on the PORANTIM Project.

RESUMES DES ARTICLES

Dans les villages comme dans les villes, les individus et les groupes ont de moins en moins de pouvoir, que ce soit sur le plan social, politique, économique ou culturel. Le pouvoir dont ils ont besoin pour mener une existence empreinte d'une certaine dignité humaine est amassé dans des groupes, des structures et des institutions qui se servent de leur pouvoir pour opprimer, exploiter et déshumaniser leurs vies. L'Eglise ne peut rester indifférente face à ces situations de pouvoir et d'impuissance. La façon dont l'Eglise réagit face aux personnes qui contrôlent le pouvoir au sein d'une société est intimement lié à la façon dont l'autorité est exercée au sein de l'Eglise elle-même. C'est dans ce contexte que FELIX WILFRED examine le pluralisme, le partage du pouvoir, la participation à la prise des décisions et la contrainte dans l'Eglise. Cette étude détaillée se termine par une excellente analyse des rapports de l'Eglise avec les systèmes et les structures de la société.

Hommes et femmes - sommes-nous vraiment différents les uns des autres? MICHAEL AMALADOSS étudie la question de la différenciation des rôles dans la société et de la valeur que l'on attribue aux caractéristiques masculines, considérées supérieures et plus utiles. C'est sur cette hypothèse que se base la structure même de l'ensemble de notre société. Après avoir examiné les systèmes économiques, la science et la technologie, la politique, tous des domaines dominés par les hommes, l'auteur passe au rôle de la religion. Tout comme la vraie libération de l'oppression économique et politique doit venir des pauvres, la libération de l'élément masculin viendra du féminin opprimé. Lorsque la volonté de changer existe, l'inspiration peut être tirée de la dimension prophétique de la religion, les Ecritures peuvent être re-interprétées et la vision première d'une nouvelle humanité peut être redécouverte.

L'article de WILLIAM MEGENNEY est tout spécialement intéressant en ce moment lorsque nous nous préparons à célébrer le 500^{ème} anniversaire de l'arrivée des Conquistadores en Amérique Latine. Les repercussions de ces événements nous touchent encore aujourd'hui. Les commentaires de J. PIEPKE et de R. NEBEL dans ce numéro nous aident à mieux comprendre la culture populaire de Brasil contemporain, mélange de l'Africain et du Chrétien. Ils font noter que toute culture doit se développer en accord avec sa propre nature et son histoire particulière. Chacune doit trouver son propre chemin authentique. L'article contient des leçons pour une nouvelle approche à l'évangélisation dans le respect de la culture des peuples "Indiens" des Amériques (voir le texte de Mgr. Ruiz dans le Bulletin SEDOS 89/pp. 156-166). Il est également possible d'en tirer des leçons utiles sur la question des liturgies et des rites Afro-Américain aux Etats-Unis.

Une lettre du MGR. ERWIN KRAUTLER, évêque du diocèse de Xingu, fait appel à la solidarité internationale pour arrêter la politique d'extermination de la population indienne du Brésil.

COMING EVENTS

DECISION-MAKING IN INTER-CULTURAL
COMMUNITIES

Fratelli Delle Scuole Cristiane: Via Aurelia 476
November 2, 1989 from 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

The Seminar will deal specifically with decision-making NOTE at the Generalate levels of SEDOS institutes of international membership egs. General Council Meetings, General Chapters, International Formation Meetings etc. etc.

1989 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

and

SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION

KEYNOTE ADDRESS - MICHAEL AMALADOSS, SJ

MISSION - FROM VATICAN II INTO THE COMING DECADE

Fratelli Delle Scuole Cristiane: Via Aurelia 476
December 12, 1989 from 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Fr. Amaladoss will give the keynote address at 9.30 a.m. The Secretariat will present the SEDOS Annual Report at 11.00 a.m. The Assembly, in groups will then consider the keynote address, the Report and Plans for the coming year.

In the afternoon at 3.30 the Assembly will hold its business session. This will be followed at 4.45 by the celebration of the Eucharist on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee. There will be a 'reception' at 6.00 p.m. followed by dinner at 7.00 p.m.

LOCAL CHURCH:
PRACTICES AND THEOLOGIES

SEDOS 1990 RESEARCH SEMINAR
VILLA CAVALLETTI, MARCH 20-24

In March 1981 SEDOS held its important Research Seminar on the Future of Mission. The major part of that Seminar was given to an examination of the Perspectives of the Mission of the Local Church.

The SEDOS Executive considers this to be one of the most significant developments in Mission and in this Silver Jubilee Year has decided to return to the topic for its 1990 Seminar at Villa Cavalletti.

The Seminar will examine how the practices and theologies of the Local Church have evolved since 1981 and how this affects the understanding and practice of mission today. This will be an important Seminar. Early registration is recommended.

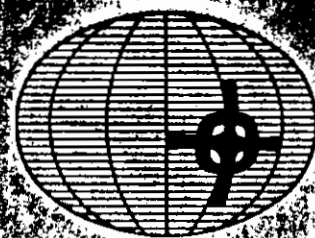
DREIKÖNIGSAKTION

der Katholischen Jungschar Österreichs

Zelinkogasse 2/5
A-1010 WIEN
AUSTRIA / EUROPE

TEL: 022 2 / 533 67 32

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(1) 533 06 58 15



89/314 Ladies and Gentlemen,

After long and difficult negotiations, the eight constitution of Brazil was promulgated on October, 5 1988. For the first time in Brazil history, the rights of the Indian aboriginal population were anchored in the constitution. This success can be in part attributed to the Indians themselves who, with active support by the Indian Missionary Council of the Brazilian Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Church, CIMI, had innumerable talks and other meetings.

Although the rights of the Indians are now constitutionally defined, the actual situation of some groups of Indians is getting worse and worse. The constitution is no more than empty words. The government is deliberately seeking a "final solution", a policy of extermination, which is being blocked by the Church and in particular by the Indian Missionary Council, CIMI. At the recently concluded General Assembly of CIMI, in Goiânia from August 8th to 13th, we discussed the situation of the Indians and our own situation in great detail, and decided on new priorities.

As I have already said, the situation of the Indians has deteriorated. The invasion of gold diggers, lumber traders, big landowners, mining companies; the mammoth projects of the government - all these have far-reaching consequences for the Indians and are a new challenge for us in our own efforts, which we see today as not only a defence of Indian rights in Brazil but also as an action which has to be international. For if life is at stake, solidarity cannot be limited by the borders of nations. Today we are more than ever aware that international action is necessary for these peoples to be saved from annihilation. We need the greatest possible international publicity, solidarity and support for our work.

At present we are working on an international edition of our monthly newspaper "PORANTIM". Printing and distribution of the newspaper will be handled by the "Dreikönigsaktion" of the Austrian "Katholische Jungschar" (Young Catholics Organisation), who have been assisting the CIMI projects for some time already.

PORANTIM will appear in German, English, French, Spanish and Italian, and its subjects will be the present situation of the aboriginal population of Brazil.

The following reports and features are planned:

- * Brazil in transition from Military rule to democracy
- * The Rights of the Indians in the Constitution
- * The Indians: Who are they, where do they come from, where are they now?
- * The work of CIMI
- * Statements by the Pope and some Bishops about Indian questions
- * Brief biographies of helpers who lost their lives
- * The Indian movement in America, 500 years of invasion

The paper is due to be published by mid-October.

In the name of the participants in the General Assembly of CIMI, I would like to ask for as much solidarity and support as you are able to give. The survival of the Indians is at stake - their lives are in danger!

Please help to see that the situation of the Indians in Brazil is publicized in your country, in your organization, in your group. Please fill in and return the enclosed questionnaire to the address given.

With many thanks in advance, and my best regards,

+ Erwin Kräutler eh.
Bishop of Xingu
President of CIMI

DETACHABLE

"PORANTIM"

Requesting Assistance in Solidarity with Brazilian Indians
to Stop the Policy of their Extermination

Please return this questionnaire to the following address:

Dreikönigsaktion der KJSO
Zelinkagasse 2/5
A-1010 Vienna, Austria.
Telephone: 0043/222/533 67 32
Telefax: 0043/1/533 06 58 15

Name of the Organization/Institution/Group

Address

Person responsible

Telex
Telefax
Telephone

Please send us _____ copies of PORANTIM in English, Italian, German,
Spanish, Portuguese Language
(Please circle the language required)

We are able to make a financial contribution

yes no

(100 copies will cost about ATS 500,) \$37

We, the Dreikönigsaktion would like to know if you can help in any way
to distribute PORANTIM International. Please send us information about
groups or organisations that would be interested in this effort.

If you are interested in receiving further information about CIMI and
the situation of the Indians in Brazil please indicate here:

interested not interested

date:

signature: