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The stories in a tribes' myth explain everything the tribe encounters in time and space. It is the collective memory of the tribe. The worst evil one can inflict on a tribe is to destroy its myth. The tribe becomes like a person with amnesia, lost and without the capacity to react or resist, a plaything in the hands of the clever. CARLOS MAESTERS gives a fascinating description of myth and compares it with the way the Old Testament was written and compiled, the function it played in the life of the Hebrew people and continues to play in our lives today.

MICHEL DECRAENE, Superior General of the Scheut Missionaries was in Zaire during the turbulent events following the rioting and pillaging in September and October 1991. He describes what happened and situates this in the wider context of demands for more democratic government in Africa.

Also in this issue is the original French text of the homily given by Fr. L. Kasanda Lumembu of the Scheut Missionaries at the impressive Mass celebrated in St. Paul's Outside the Walls for the victims of the brutal massacre during the religious procession on February 16, 1992 in Kinshasa. Two items of interest for SEDOS Bulletin readers; a Zairean government minister now blames the Bishops of Zaire for the massacre accusing them of being infected by Latin American liberation theology; and there is a communication this week that the Zairean President Mobutu has now agreed to allow the National Conference to reconvene. As so often happens innocent people have to be killed before dictators can be convinced of the need for change.

JAMES KROEGER, MM, highlights the significant points in last year's Vatican document on Dialogue and Mission. We are grateful to Fr. Kroeger for this excellent analysis.

"Bible Sharing" may defy a clear definition but it always refers to a group of people who gather to listen in common and in prayer to God's Word. The method described here comes from

the Philippines.

EATWOT has gone from moderate beginnings in 1976 to being an increasingly significant voice of theologians throughout the third world. We include their Press Release following their January, Nairobi Meeting.

There are Mission Moments, news items and notices of important coming events.

NEWS

SEDOS NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the DAUGHTERS OF THE HEART OF MARY (Figlie di Cuore di Maria) whose membership of SEDOS was approved at the Executive Committee Meeting on February 19, 1992. The Superior General is Sr. Maureen Hallisey and their Generalate is in Paris.

CHRISTIAN MUSLIM DIALOGUE

Tom Michel, SJ presented the first session and Mgr. Mike Fitzgerald the second session in the three lecture series on Muslim-Christian Dialogue at the SVD College on February 20 and March 6 respectively. Both these Conferences were well attended. The speakers presented a sympathetic understanding of Islam. Recordings of the Muezzin's morning prayer at the sessions produced a prayerful silence and an atmosphere of receptivity. The speakers effectively removed many misunderstandings both regarding the evolution of Islam and the origin and compilation of the Koran. All copies of the Koran which we had made available were quickly taken. Copies are still available at a very reasonable exchange in the Leonina Bookshop.

PROPHETIC MISSION IN A CHANGING WORLD

This week we sent Italian, Spanish and French translations of the 1991 Villa Cavalletti SEDOS Seminar to all SEDOS members who requested these translations. Our sincere thanks to all those who helped to do these translations.

INDIAN MYTHS AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

Carlos Maesters

A CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION that truly transmits the Gospel seeks to reveal, both by witness and by the Word, the Good News of the liberating presence of God who works in our lives through our Lord Jesus Christ. The way God is present in our lives and the way he brings us up (this is the sense of educates) to be ready for Christ is revealed in the Old Testament. There, as the Constitution Dei Verbum says, we are shown 'the way the just and merciful God acts with men and women' and find the story of the 'true divine pedagogy' (DV 15).

I will treat of two subjects connected with the life of the Indians: their myths and their land rights. I will try to explore these two subjects in light of the Bible, the Old Testament particularly, hoping to find better approaches to evangelisation and religious instruction among Indians.

A. THE MYTHS OF THE INDIANS



their tribal life, around which all the rest is structured.

2. The Content of Myth

A myth is much more than a spicy story about creation times. If you really wanted to know an entire myth, you would have to listen many hours, even days to learn its whole content. And a myth's content is not hard and fast. It is constantly being retold in light of the new problems that keep appearing. It is like a tree continually growing from a mysterious, unseen root, always forking out in new branches, as events rain on it and problems fertilise its soil. Few people would know its whole content.

3. The Myth Depicts The Tribe's 'Home' And Preserves It

The myth, in the whole range of its stories, is like the web spread across rocks and boughs to serve the spider as its dwelling. The myth is the invisible fabric the tribe spreads across the territory it occupies and the

1. The Wrong Approach to Myths

In their tribes Indians hand on stories of long tradition, which we call 'myths'. For many of us a 'myth' is a synonym for something not good, a pagan thing of no value like the fantasies that frame the false practices of heretical cults. The myth is often taken for an error which evangelisation should root out, for something backward that progress and culture should do away with. But for the Indians themselves, myth is the central pillar of

history it has travelled. The myth speaks of mountain peaks, rivers, fountains, plains, trees, animals, trails, flowers, fish, clouds, etc. - elements of the territory the tribe inhabits. It speaks besides of ancestors, battles, invasions, epidemics, migrations, upheavals, heroic epochs, etc. - elements of the history the tribe has lived through. These elements of territory and history (of space and time) are the points at which the tribe attaches the threads of the invisible web woven across its domain, constructing its 'home'.

The stories in the myth 'explain' everything the tribe encounters in time and space, and link it all to the tribe's world, providing them security and identity. It is within the time and space ordered by this invisible fabric that the tribe feels at home, as a spider does in its web. By means of its myth the tribe knows what it is about, encounters itself, encounters others and also the divinity. In their myth they find the harmony of their life.

4. Myth As The Memory Of The Tribe

In a certain sense, the myth is greater than the tribe's members. It is their collective memory, the memory of their origins, by which the members of the tribe know their identity and their place in the world. The myth enfolds, sustains, guides and protects them, provides their upbringing. With its strange symbolism, the myth hides its secret from outsiders and reveals it to those who belong to the household. Its ultimate secret is to reveal the meaning of existence to the members of the tribe. The worst thing that can happen to someone is to lose his or her memory. The person with amnesia becomes lost and having lost the capacity to react and resist, easily becomes a plaything in the hands of the clever. To deprive someone of memory is the same as killing him or her from the inside. The worst evil one can inflict on a tribe is to destroy its myth.

5. The Force Of Myth In Defence Of The Tribe's Life

When a strong wind tears its web the spider goes into action. If possible, the

spider reweaves the web and stays. If not, the spider goes away. When some event ruptures the harmony of life the myth was holding in place, the tribe must go into action or be lost. For example, the government indifferently builds a road through the middle of the tribe's 'space'. The road is like an open wound on the soul of the Indians. It shakes the tribe's identity. If possible, the tribe reweaves its harmony. The people introduce this new fact into their myth, thus giving it already its place 'accounted for' in the myth. If this is not possible, the tribe retreats, loses itself, and dies as a tribe. Only isolated individuals survive, without their memory, lost. When a wound is opened on a human body, life reacts and sets forces to work which protect the body against the invader and the danger of death. This defence against invasion scars the skin with its marks.

The myth of the Indians is full of scars, the result of the wounds inflicted by events and the defensive response of the tribe. For instance, almost all Indian myths speak of the arrival in the Americas of the Portuguese and the Spanish. This event was an upheaval in their life and many tribes disappeared. Others, to keep from being lost and to recover their slipping identity, linked this new event to their ancient origins and thus reappropriated it in the myth, in the 'centrifugal' force of the tribe's consciousness expressed in its myth. The myth by its own nature is a 'conservative' force: it conserves the life of the tribe and protects it.

6. The Applications Of Myth In The Tribe's Life

To put it another way, the myth is constantly being retold and modified in light of new events which are thus incorporated into the tribe's consciousness and life. The myth, as the Indians apply and retell it today, is the expression of their consciousness of themselves. The myth is evoked and recited according to its proper ceremonial procedure, for precisely determined seasons or situations. It is connected with specific festivals, problems or events. Accordingly, the

appropriate myth or part of a myth is recited. It is not just anyone who performs the recitation, but the person whose function it is in the tribe.

The stories the myth recounts are events happening in the present, seen through the eyes of those who recite them, at the same time as they recite them. By the recitation the tribe binds itself, or binds itself again (*re-ligion*, *re-ligare*, re-binding), still more to the energy of its ever present origin, and receives from this origin the force to live, or to come back to life. The myth is like the storehouse from which the owner takes out old things and new, according to the tribe's needs, to offer them light and guidance for the solution of life's problems. The myth dies

with the tribe and is reborn with them. It is the gauge of their health.

7. The Myth As Key To The Tribe's Life

Briefly put, the myth is like a catalyst in the tribe's life. It is the key the Indian holds to read and interpret all that exists and all that happens. Their myth is the tribe's encyclopedia. Everything is in it! The myth is the tribe's tradition, its rule of life, its law, its medicine, its past, its present and its future. Whatever is important for the life of the tribe is found in it. You could call the myth the Indians' Bible. It is the expression of their way of seeing life, nature and the world, the consciousness the tribe has of itself as a tribe. Better still, you could call their myth the tribe's Old Testament.

B. THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. The Stories Of The Old Testament

The way in which the Old Testament was written and compiled, and the function it played among the Hebrew people and still plays in our life, are rather similar to the process which determines the origin and function of myths in the life of the Indians. The Old Testament is the collection of stories and traditions, told and retold in the light of current situations, that enabled the people to bring their faith to bear on new events, discover their mission and find guidance for their actions.

The new events may have battered and wounded the people's identity as the people of God, but the inner force of their faith was always stronger than the force of disintegration in events. The people always succeeded in picking up the thread again, reinterpreting their past in the light of the new present and in response to it, reweaving thus the invisible web of their 'home' as a people.

2. The Twelve Tribes And Their Myths

In the beginning the Hebrews were not yet a people. They were simply an agglomeration of twelve nomad tribes

wandering in the desert. Twelve Asiatic tribes, driven by hunger, started to migrate from Mesopotamia to Egypt, looking for a morsel of land they could settle on. Their migrations extended from 1800 to 1600 BC and marked their cultural transition from a people of nomadic herders to a people of sedentary planters. Their 400 years in Egypt were the beginnings of sedentarisation, during which the Hebrews experienced a time of relative peace and prosperity. But the Pharaohs, the previous inhabitants of the land, reasserted themselves and started to reduce to slavery the Asiatic inhabitants of the Nile delta.

Under the leadership of Moses the Hebrews succeeded in escaping to the desert and reverted to what they had been before, a nomadic people herding sheep and goats. When they came out of Egypt, they were not yet a 'people'. They were merely a band of twelve tribes, held together by a common will to escape from bondage. They preferred the hard life of the desert with freedom, to the abundance of Egypt without it. But their Exodus, that is their escape from Egypt, and their forty years in the desert turned out to be a new juncture that had a deep effect on

them even changing the focal point of their lives.

3. The Influence Of The Exodus On The Myth

When the tribes came out of Egypt, the God of Abraham made his presence felt in a new way. They understood that God was with them in their effort to free themselves from the bondage of Egypt. The new experience of the Exodus was like a liberating act God performed on their behalf. It was so great and had such a deep impact that it could never have been absorbed and neutralised by the framework of their myth. This time it was not the myth that incorporated the new event. Rather, the new historical fact provoked a new consciousness into which the myth was integrated and where it got new meaning. This is the sign and likewise the proof that the event of the Exodus set a decisive mark for all time on the existence of the Hebrews.

Through the Exodus the Hebrews made a new discovery of their *Origin* - God himself. They underwent a new experience of God. Instead of the God of nature and the eternal cycle of return, proper to myths, God became for them the God of history accompanying them on the journey through life toward a future of freedom and peace.

The Exodus started a gradual change, a conversion at the centre of their lives. The paradise of the past became a projection into the future as a pledge and a prophecy of their hope. This was the great change that the events provoked in the living core where myths are generated. After this new experience of God the myths and old stories began to be 'retold' in a new way. The myth was transformed not from without but from within until it became the expression of a new consciousness in the people rooted in their Origin and knowing themselves as the people of God.

4. How The Myths Of The Twelve Tribes Changed

The change or conversion did not come about by an external action shat-

tering the myths but by a new discovery of God as the liberating God, the Lord of History. It was not a change in the 'content' of the myth but rather in the 'receptacle' or 'container', that changed the 'content'. (Anyone who does not note this will always be frustrated. No matter how new and round your content is, if the receptacle is square the water you pour into it will take on an angular shape!) The change is in the mental structure with which the tribes looked at their stories and myths. Even after the Exodus they would continue to refer to the same stories and the same myths and tell them, but these stories and myths were applied and told from a new outlook, born of God.

Here lies the decisive moment of conversion and change. A new concept of space and time is appearing. It is no longer the cyclical time of the eternal return to the origins but a linear time that starts from a beginning and heads towards an end, following a plan that comes from God. Time becomes history. The space of the people's territory once a mere geographical area, becomes the space where the people live with their God and walk with him.

Still, all this change was slow and progressive. It was intimately intertwined with the cultural transition from a nomadic to a sedentary people, bound up with social and political changes. It was a seed buried in the field of the people, planted at the Exodus and growing through crisis points and problems under the rain and fertilisation of events, to its maturity at the time of the Captivity. The fruit was borne after the Captivity, when Cyrus decreed the return of the people to their land. The fruit was finally harvested at the Resurrection of Christ.

5. Faith And Religion

The origin, the root, from which the people's consciousness forms, and the centre around which it revolves, was and continues to be faith in the One God who loves his people and makes a plan of salvation and liberation for their benefit. It is faith in Emmanuel, God-with-us. Religion is the concrete

manner of putting faith into practice, that is, of binding and rebinding one's life and all the expressions of one's life, to God. To religion belong the observances, customs, rules, rites, festivals, ceremonies. Religion is conditioned by the culture one lives in. It changes and has to change. It is faith that does not change. Faith is purified and intensified through the changes that religion undergoes. Faith is religion's soul; religion is faith's body. Religion is like the wire conducting the electric current of faith. Evangelisation and Christian instruction refer first of all to faith rather than to religion.

It is no help to people to tell them their religion is faith's body. It is no help to tell them their religion is false. It would amount to changing a steel wire for a copper one, but without hooking up to electric current. When God entered into communication with the twelve tribes, he did not find fault with the wiring of their religion, he charged those wires with a new energy. This new energy of faith, of itself, little by little improved on, purified and transformed the wires of religion.

This change took 1800 years. Can we skip that 1800 years? Should we start changing the wires of the Indian tribes' religion when they do not yet possess the current of faith to pass along these wires? All peoples have their religion and their religion has its wiring. And as the story of the Old Testament shows us, the wires of the prior religion of the twelve tribes were considered suitable by God to receive and conduct the first shocks of the electric current of the Faith. It was the tribes themselves, as they walked with their God who began to perceive the faults in their wiring and repair them, adjusting the wiring to conduct faith pure and undistorted, to the members of the tribe.

6. Faith And Religion Form An Inseparable Unit Like Soul And Body

The body does not exist without the soul, nor the soul without the body. Faith does not exist without religion; it does not exist without finding concrete

expression in observances, rites, festivals, duties, missions, rules, clergy etc. Faith can only exist embodied in a culture. On one hand, if the culture changes, faith may undergo a crisis. On the other hand, a more exacting vision of faith may reveal deficiencies in a culture. Faith and culture always exist intertwined with one another and at the same time they are in a continual conflict. The Old Testament is a clear proof of that.

Some examples: The principle festival of the Hebrew people, Passover, for example, was a mythic festival of nomadic origin. The Passover was not condemned or repudiated but taken over and purified until it became the centre of the life of faith as it still is today.

The temple of Jerusalem was built on the model of the pagan temples of Egypt and lasted until the coming of Jesus Christ.

Any number of laws in the book of Exodus can be found in the codes of other peoples of Mesopotamia or Egypt.

Passages in the Wisdom books were copied from the wisdom literature of Egypt.

The system of government of David's kingdom was copied from neighbouring peoples and yet still conveys to us today the focal image of the Gospel message, namely the Kingdom of God.

Even God's name, Yahweh, was the name of a divinity venerated by nomad tribes on Mount Sinai. After this name became the name of the Living and True God, it received a new explanation, arising from the people's faith in a Liberator God (see Ex 3:4).

The ways of worshipping God, for example, the golden calf and the high places, were common to the peoples of the surrounding regions and belonged to the cultural background of nomadic tribes. Some of these were condemned and rejected but only in proportion as it was verified that they could not be vehicles for faith in the Living God.

All of this shows that God made his entrance into the life of a people slowly and progressively in step with the capacities and the culture of the people in question. The *law of incarnation*

which reached its high point with the incarnation of the Son of God, underlies the whole course of God's action towards humanity. The history of the people of God is a history of 'renovation' - that is, it starts from the 'old' to arrive at the 'new'. It is in the new that the old finds its fulfilment. There it reveals all its dimensions. All of this can also be applied to the myths of the Indians, which depicted their home and preserved it.

7. The Old Testament Depicts the 'Home' of the People of God and Preserves It

The myths of the twelve tribes were not eliminated but transformed, and from within. The good that existed in them was entirely retained and even enhanced. Thus, just as myths do, the Old Testament weaves an invisible web across the history (time) and the territory (space) of the Hebrew people. By the fabric of this web the people explain themselves and their place in the world. For instance, the Old Testament recounts the sojourns of the people and their past migrations, explains the origin of their centre of pilgrimage, justifies the laws that regulate their life as a people, describes illnesses and their remedies, tells the story of wars and the deeds of great personalities of the past. It contains long genealogies, which carry far more meaning than just a list of names. The sun and the moon are there, the stars, the rivers, the desert, political alliances and enmities, languages, festivals, rites. There is a complete account of the cities and villages that belong to each tribe, precise indications to the limits of their territories, etc. Thus all things belonging to the life and history of the people were bound and rebound (religion) to their abiding origin, that is, to their God.

8. The Content Of The Old Testament

As with the myths, the content of the Old Testament was not immutable. It grew as the people grew in the course of their history. The last book of the Old Testament was written less than sixty years before the coming of Christ. The content of the Old Testament is

quite varied, just as life and history are. It contains edifying stories and licentious ones, some still more spicy than the stories in many myths of Indian tribes. Like the myths, these stories were continually retold and updated in the light of new events and in function of them. Like the myths, the Old Testament is full of the scars of this process, fruit of the constant effort of the people to absorb, neutralise and assimilate into their life the disintegrating force of events.

The last of these successive retellings of the story was made by the Christians in the light of the definitive event of Jesus Christ. In Jesus is revealed, in Paul's expression, God's Yes to all the hopes of the people, nurtured during 1800 years and kept alive in their midst by constant evocation and recitation of the stories of the Old Testament. In Christ, at last, the Old Testament found its fulfilment, the bud opened and revealed the flower. What was already present in the tiny seed of the beginnings, appears now at the end as the goal of all creation. Christ came not to abolish but to fulfil, that is, to bring 'former things' to their accomplishment. The same principle applies to the myths of the Indians.

9. The Evocation and Recitation Of The Old Testament In The Life Of The People

As for the myths, the evocation and recitation of the Old Testament followed the appropriate ceremonial rules. It took place at fixed seasons or in particular situations, connected with specific festivals, problems or events. According to the festival or situation, such and such a portion of the Old Testament was to be recited. This recitation could not be performed by just anybody; someone specific among the people exercised that function.

For example, on their return from captivity the people were assembled by Ezra for the solemn reading of the Law. This was a way of helping people orient themselves in a new situation.

When they held the renewal of the Covenant in the time of Joshua, there

was a solemn reading of the terms of the contract at Shechem.

During the Maccabees' revolt the people had replied to envoys from Rome that they needed no letters of support from the Emperor since they had their sacred books from which to derive their encouragement.

In the time of Jesus the people assembled every week in the synagogue to listen to readings from the law and the prophets, followed by a commentary.

Paul said that the reading of the Old Testament taught patience, that is, the capacity to hold out and wait. He says further that Holy Scripture is inspired, that is, the power of God is communicated through it. When it is recited, the people, through faith, enter into direct contact with this power. For those who believe, for those who belong to the household, the stories they retell are not an affair of the past but a truth of

the present, experienced by those who recite them and those who listen. Paul clearly says that these stories were written for us, and in another passage explains that they are types, abiding models of what is wont to occur.

The reading of the Bible has a purifying function, for it puts the people in contact with their origin, God. It used to be that after the priest had read the Gospel he had to say '*per Evangelica dicta delegantur nostra delicta*' (by the words of the Gospel may our sins be washed away.) In a word, the function of the Old Testament in the life of the people was very similar to the function their myths still play today in the life of the Indians.

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A RISING TIDE IN AFRICA ZAIRE - AN ASSESSMENT

Michel Decraene, CICM

(Fr. M. Decraene is Superior General of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, known also as the Scheut Missionaries. The Congregation has a considerable membership, both expatriate and Zairian, on mission in Zaire. Fr. Decraene was on an extended visit to the members of his Congregation in Zaire when the recent disturbances took place. He gave an eye witness account and an assessment of the situation in Zaire, to a meeting of the SEDOS ZAIRE GROUP in December, 1991. His text follows. All SEDOS members having an interest in Zaire are welcome at the Zaire Update Meetings. Ed.)

The riots of September-October 1991 in Zaire are not an isolated phenomenon. They are part of a rising tide throughout Black Africa in its quest for freedom, self respect and involvement. I will first review briefly the situation in Black African countries where moves towards democracy have met with success, resistance or failure. I will then concentrate on Zaire. What is happening there? How best explain it? Can hopes be raised for a better future?

AFRICA ON THE ROAD TO DEMOCRACY

Of the 45 countries which make up Black Africa, 38 are governed either by a single party or by a dictatorship. In some of these countries the people have gained a voice; in others the dictator remains obdurate. In yet others, the dictator has been violently overthrown (1).

Benin was the first country to bring about a change in February 1990 by instituting the National Conference of Reconciliation, presided over by Mgr. Isidore de Souza, Bishop of Cotonou. Gabon quickly followed Benin's lead and established a National Assembly of All the Vital Forces. Again there was a spontaneous appeal to a Bishop, Mgr. Mvé, to preside over the Assembly. In

the Congo, the National Conference took place between February and June 1991, under the chairmanship of Mgr. Ernest Kombo, Archbishop of Brazzaville. Togo began its Conference in July 1991 in spite of President Eyadema's opposition. It lasted a protracted two months and experienced considerable difficulty until its successful conclusion on 28 August 1991. It too was chaired by a bishop, Mgr. Fanoko Kpodzro. Niger and Mali then followed the example set by their neighbours.

Democratic Moves Blocked

By contrast, in other countries the proposal for a National Conference caused sharp disagreement between the *régime* in power and the forces of the opposition. In Cameroon, Paul Biya did not entertain the idea of a National Conference. In the Cote d'Ivoire, Houphouët-Boigny succeeded in avoiding the convocation of a National Conference by forestalling the claims of democracy. "We do not need to imitate Benin because we are in the process of building democracy in our country."

In Chad, a National Conference was promised by March 1992. In Madagascar, an opposition party was formed and has a "Prime Minister to Represent the Rebels". In Kenya, the Bishops have stressed the need for convoking a

National Conference but President Moi wishes to remain in sole power. He is head of the Kanu Party. Rawlings, the President of Ghana, sticks to his "no-party system" hoping to manage the change in his own arbitrary manner.

CONVERGENT TRENDS

Democracy which is beginning to make headway in the countries of Black Africa shows some convergent trends. Two appear to be crucial; the causes of unrest; the part which the Church plays (2).

Causes of the Unrest

In 1990, African countries had about thirty years of independence and the stage had been reached for an overall review of what this meant. It has proved to be catastrophic from almost every point of view. One must not forget that 60% of the African population to-day is under twenty-five years of age. A youthful population has experienced the arbitrary rule of the post-colonial *régimes* arrests, round-ups, censure, etc..

The failure and fall of Communism has shown up, not only the need for freedom, participation and pluralism, but it has forced the Western allies of the African political *régimes* to throw off their old fear of Communism. Events in Eastern Europe have conveyed to Africans "the need for liberty now or never."

The Church

The Church has played an important role in the process of bringing about democracy which is now in full swing in Africa. However, Achille MBEMBE of Cameroon has written: "It was to be hoped that this movement would be accompanied by practical advice from the Church, but the truth forces one to say that that it is very rarely the case. Neither catechesis, nor the teaching of church men helped those on the road to political and economic democracy.... One waits in vain for the Church as a whole to take a position and firmly to

denounce institutional violence against democracy; to make a clear, authoritative and coherent statement on the economy" (cf. ARM, May 1991).

But, from the beginning of 1990 up to the present, the churches have made statements on several occasions. They have opened the way for deep reflection on the state of African countries, on what is at stake and which values to promote. But it is also true that the voices raised are not all in agreement. There is division within the episcopate....

ZAIRE

From April 24, 1990, to the Present Multi Party System

Zaire has been in the process of becoming a democracy since 24 April 1990 (3) when the Head of State declared: "I have decided to introduce political pluralism once again in our country by opting for a system with three political parties...." Pressured by the political opinion already active at that time, the same Head of State decided, on 6 October 1990, to go from a multi-party system made up of three parties to an integral multi-party-system with an unlimited number of political parties. Political parties have grown up like mushrooms since then.

Since 24 April 1990, there has been the birth of political parties or rather regroupings which call themselves political parties. At present there are 109 legally recognized parties, and on the waiting list are still more whose credentials are being studied. Some parties have members while others have only a leader or a provisional directorate. Some exist only by virtue of a declaration published in some newspaper. Some political leaders distribute money or largesse to people in order to buy their sympathy and support. Similarly, there are those who demand money or other material goods in return for supporting a party.

There are people who face difficulty at home because they have refused to support one or other party: a mother of a family whose husband has threatened

to repudiate her if she fails to support either the party he has chosen or created; youths who have trouble with their father because they have joined a party different from his; people who have difficulty at work because they have refused to join the same political party as their employer; employees who have been dismissed simply because they are members of a party different from their employers.

Some people praise this or that party simply because they already hold a membership card. Others, undecided, hesitate about joining this or that party and still others, rather sceptical, remain aloof from the game of politics....

Political parties reshuffle.

An example is the Independent Republican Party which has merged with other parties to form the UFERI, but similar reshuffling is possible for forty other parties. Other parties break up; the MPR for example has divided into two groups - the popular movement for renewal and the group to renew the peoples' revolutionary movement. Most of these parties claim to be the opposition party to the one still in power. The leaders of some political parties travel to Europe and the United States in order to enlist support and to get themselves recognized by the European and American powers who continue to act as regents.

Onetime politicians of the Second Republic, today, head parties in opposition to the system which they once supported with all their might as late as yesterday. Some parties dialogue with the party in power to arrive at a consensus in the advance towards democracy; others take their opposition to the system represented by the party in power to the extreme, refusing point blank to treat with that party and demanding its resignation.

All these parties develop strategies which aim at obtaining the supreme power - candidature to the presidency of the Republic. They promise the people happiness; they claim to be able to resolve all problems and announce a new society based on democracy and

justice. There are parties which appropriate the power to speak in the name of the people before the people have even elected them to power". (José Mpundu, *Partis politiques*, Editions L'Epiphanie, 1991, pp.-7-10)

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The "National Sovereign Conference" opened on 7 august 1991 in the *Palais du Peuple* in Kinshasha. The opening had been scheduled for April 28 1991, but had then been postponed until July 31, and finally set back until August 7. Mulumba Lukoji, the then Prime Minister, opened the sessions with a rather negative summary of the 31 years of independence.

"The positive results achieved here and there are on the whole rather scarce, given the country's potential and the volume of resources which have been employed effectively to date. Generally speaking, therefore the overall balance-sheet of our thirty-one years of independence is a rather negative one. In fact there is nothing of which to be inordinately proud when one takes into consideration the particularly high infantile and maternal mortality rates in our country. Nor is there much to boast of when one realizes how low the level of elementary instruction of the people is, and how high the loss of education at all levels. By contrast with 30 June 1960 there are no longer any colonizers to blame for the past; the midwife of this second birth is no longer a foreign power, but the élite of the Zairian people itself".

Delegates' Credentials

At the opening session, there were 750 delegates over and above the 2.850 approved. Mulumba Lukoji was obliged to suspend the session in order to verify the identity of the representatives accredited. Controversies arose; the opposition denounced the infiltration of numerous agents of Mobutu among the representatives of civil society who were allocated 2.500 seats. 1.100 of these delegates represented civil society, 900 represented political

parties, 750 the public institutions and 100 the independents.

Besides the question of the credentials of the delegates, there was also the question of the sovereignty of the National Conference. Following a long debate this was approved, recognised and approved.

Catholic Church Withdraws

On September 20, Mgr. Monsengwo, President of the Episcopal Conference of Zaire and Head of the delegation of the Catholic Church at the National Conference, announced that the Catholic delegation would provisionally withdraw from participation in the National Conference. Two main reasons were given for this decision: 1) There is a serious lack of organization which if it continues will ensure that the Conference achieves nothing; 2) The Catholic Church notes that there is an absence of a sincere and concerted effort on the part of many to install true democracy through the National Conference. Three days later, September 23 pillaging broke out in Kinshasa.

Conference Reconvenes

On December 11, the National Conference reconvened and at the end of the inaugural meeting which lasted more than twenty consecutive hours, Mgr. Monsengwo was elected to preside over the Provisional Committee set up to conduct the work of the Conference. Mgr. Monsegwo obtained 65% of the 2.289 votes counted. Mr Joseph Iled of the Social Christian Democratic Party was elected Vice-President. (Cf. DIA of December 13, 1991 for information on the make-up of the Conference.

The September and October Pillaging

It all began in Kinshasa on 23 September 1991. Not having received their pay the soldiers mutinied and began to pillage the shops and markets. The inhabitants who had been living in misery for a long time joined in the pillaging. Kinshasa was sacked for two days. The arrival of the French and Belgian paratroopers put a stop to it, re-established order and evacuated for-

eign dependents, both nationals and foreigners. In the days following, similar events took place in other towns of the country. A month later, in October, on a Monday night, rioting and pillaging instigated by the army broke out all over Zaire. By contrast, the soldiers in Kinshasa, who had unleashed the rioting of September 23, took no action. The atmosphere in the Zairian capital however was extremely tense.

How can this explosion of violence be explained? The suspension of the work of the National Sovereign Conference brought the country to a stand-still. On September 1991 the national television network interrupted its live broadcast of the Conference from the Palais du Peuple where cacophony reigned. The suspension of the work discouraged even the most optimistic. The population, for its part, saw the opportunities that its scant resources represented, diminish from day to day. Prices for food stuffs soared. Devaluation of the currency continued: in July the official exchange for the dollar was 7.236 Zaires; by mid-August it was 15.471 Zaires on the official market and no one knew when this trend would stop.

The outbreak of pillaging was the result of frustration caused by crying inequalities. None of this would have taken place if the authorities, before long, had established greater social justice, allocated fairer wages, followed a policy of creating jobs, avoided the crying injustices arising from the luxury of a few and the poverty of the majority. One should recognize in the events which took place the cry of a people which had no other means of saying: "We cannot continue to live in society as it is." This clumsy reaction of levelling everything expressed a sort of vengeance against constantly growing inequalities.

Where was the Church all this time?

The Catholic Church which had withdrawn its participation from the National Sovereign Conference ten days earlier, addressed the people of Zaire through its standing Episcopal Committee on 30 September 1991:

"Today, disaster has struck our Nation. In most of the urban centres, what remains of our economy has been utterly ruined and famine is at the door. The political institutions are at a stand-still. The National Conference in which we place the last hope of the Nation is at an impasse.... Let us ask God for a new heart and a new spirit to give us, like the children of Israel, the courage, the hope and the energy to stand up and extract our Nation from ruin and to found it anew".

PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

It is not possible to give an exhaustive account here of all the consequences and initiatives following from the plight of the country. I draw attention to a few of the most important.

Missionaries In Crises

If it is not unusual for expatriates to leave a country in circumstances similar to those in Zaire but it is also quite normal for religious missionaries to stay in the country to which they have been sent on mission even in crises. Christ has sent them; it is in his name that they have been sent on mission; it is in his name that they are there. They have not come in their own name nor have their respective governments sent them out or given them a mandate. They are there in the service of the Church and their presence is based in Christ. They form part of the local church which has made them welcome and they expect to support this church and its people as much in time of trial as in more propitious days. They are united to those others who have come with them on mission and they are just as united to their Zairian colleagues who suffer as much in troubled situations. They give each other mutual support.

The decision of the missionaries to stay in time of trouble makes clear the reason for their presence and is more eloquent than words. It is in itself a Gospel lesson. The events which took place in Zaire therefore gave the mis-

sionaries the chance to deepen their experience and to purify - should this be necessary - the motivation for their presence, anchored in Jesus Christ, in solidarity and integration.

According to the Committee of the Missionary Institutes (CIM), in Brussels, 123 of the 928 Belgian missionaries working in Zaire returned to Belgium on November 4; 43 of these were on leave and 20 were for medical reasons; some 60 left on account of the crisis. (The Tablet, 7 December 1991).

A Challenge for the Church

- The present difficulties are also an invitation to deepen efforts at evangelization. These events are a test, but also an opportunity to test the methods, the teaching and the behaviour of the people of the Church. They also represent an opportunity to increase the responsibility of Christians at all levels.

- "Among those who were responsible for the government and leadership of our country in different sectors and at all levels, just as among those who stole, pillaged and destroyed the goods of others during these days, many were Christians, also Catholics. Neither have given first place to faith in their lives. They have not fulfilled their obligations nor their political and civil duties as Christians". This is a quotation from "Thoughts circulated to help pastoral agents proclaim the Word of God as the Good News of salvation in the days following the events of September 23 and 24 1991 in Kinshasa).

- The work of forming responsible citizens must be intensified. The recent events have brought to light a new and promising awareness that people are no longer disposed, as in the past, to let things take their course. They have discovered too that united, one can resist, one is stronger, but at the same time the extent of the peoples' vulnerability has been demonstrated by their lack of awareness and judgement. It is therefore necessary to redouble to redouble initiatives to educate people to put into practice sound principles of justice,

respect, co-responsibility and sharing.

- The Church in Zaire is very authoritative. People were in fact, accustomed to expecting directions, but joint action must be developed now and initiatives encouraged.

- Lastly, while all the public institutions have tended to lose honour the Church has retained its standing. However it is classified among the land-owners and it is not clear that all it possesses is effectively at the service of the entire people. Often the Church's works are considered to be private enterprises whereas they should be and appear to be the peoples' own works, their Church, their hearth, their home.

Notes:

1) For concise information on democratic procedures in Black Africa See ANB/BIA Dossiers, 1 April 1991, *Eglise et Démocratie en Afrique*; Vivant Univers,

n. 395, Sept.-Oct. 1991, *Présence de l'Eglise dans le processus de démocratisation*. This article, by Walter Aelvoet, enlarges on the article quoted above; Nigrizia, December 1991, pp.6 Amedeo M. Ricucci, *Primavera d'Africa*; *Documentation Catholique*, n. 2039, 1 December 1991, *L'Afrique à un tournant*.

2) The role of the Church in the process of democracy in Africa can be analysed from recent affirmations on the continent of Africa in Zaire-Afrique, August-September 1991, No. 257, pp.349ff; See also Ka Mana, *Les églises africaines face aux mutations actuelles en Afrique*; *Actualités religieuses dans le monde*, 15 May 1991; Achille MBEMBE, *Les Eglises Chahutés*.

3) Information on Zaire can be found in *Revue Zaire-Afrique*, monthly magazine published in Kinshasa by CEPS, B.P. 3375, Kinshasa-Gombe; DIA Press Agency, B.P. 2598, Kinshasa I.; Bulletin AB/BIA. Broadcasts: Nederland Radio Broadcasts at 15.30 hrs. (SW 15.280 Khz)

RENEWING MISSION THROUGH DIALOGUE

James H. Kroeger, MM

DIALOGUE AND PROCLAMATION does not stand in isolation from the renewal in mission thought begun by Vatican II. A quarter-century of exploration has followed an enlightening trajectory: Vatican II decrees on mission, *AD GENTES* and on religions, *NOSTRA AETATE*, Paul VI's exhortation on evangelization, *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI*, the Secretariat for Non-Christians' 1984 masterpiece, *DIALOGUE AND MISSION*, and John Paul II's encyclical, *REDEMPTORIS MISSIO*. These six resources form the core of the universal church's recent magisterium on mission and evangelization.

Writing as an Asian missionary, this author laments that in *Dialogue and Proclamation* the excellent work and reflective insights of the Asian local churches are not included in this work - even in the endnotes. Asian bishops, theologians and missionaries have many treasures to share about interreligious dialogue; they are drawn from their lived experience, they are theologically rich, creatively and competently expressed. The "Theses on Interreligious Dialogue" prepared by the Theological Advisory Commission of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) are an example of the competent work done by the local churches in Asia. Such work deserves recognition.

Two Roman bodies cooperated to issue *Dialogue and Proclamation*; the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. The document which was five years in preparation was issued at Pentecost 1991.

DIALOGUE INTEGRATES MISSION

John Paul II already treated dialogue with our brothers and sisters of other religions in *Redemptoris Missio* (55-57). The pope noted that "Interreligious dialogue is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission... . The Church sees no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue."

This latest document, standing in continuity with *Redemptoris Missio*, affirms and elaborates the necessity of dialogue and its relationship to proclamation. A new awareness of religious plurality has emerged in today's world where religious traditions and their adherents demand a sensitive response from Christians. John Paul II has noted, "There can be no question

(between dialogue and proclamation) of choosing one and ignoring or rejecting the other"(6).

Dialogue is not a mere decoration or technique of pre-evangelization. It is "one of the integral elements of the Church's evangelizing mission"(9). Again, dialogue along with proclamation are to be viewed as "component elements and authentic forms of the one evangelizing mission of the Church"(2). In a word, interreligious dialogue has found its home within the church's evangelizing mission (33-41).

Vision Of Evangelization

Underlying this positive evaluation of dialogue within the church's mission is a vision of evangelization that is best described as comprehensive, integral and holistic. In accepting that the church's evangelizing mission is a "single but complex and articulated reality," one understands that the "principle elements" of mission are "presence and witness; commitment to social development and human liberation; liturgical life, prayer and con-

templation; interreligious dialogue; and finally, proclamation and catechesis" (2). Stated succinctly, all mission evisions integral evangelization (2, 8, 55, 75, 76). Jesus himself accomplished his Abba-given mission in this holistic manner (21-23, 55).

If Jesus' mission and the church's continuance of it are viewed holistically, then dialogue within mission will refer to "all positive and constructive inter-religious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment" (9). The church is firmly and irreversibly committed to promoting and enhancing this multi-faceted dialogue (54).

ATTITUDES ARE PIVOTAL

The Pentecost 1984 document *Dialogue and Mission* from the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians (now known as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue) bore the cumbersome yet descriptive title: "*The Attitude of the Church toward the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Missions*". By focusing on the church's "attitude" toward those whom she approaches in mission, a pivotal theme in dialogue is identified. In short, all authentic dialogue demands an "attitude of respect" which must "permeate all those activities constituting the evangelizing mission of the Church".

Transforming Prejudicial Attitudes

A closer look at the "attitudes" essential to dialogue will prove enlightening. History is replete with religious conflicts, cultural and ethnic domination, territorial wars and destruction, - an endless list is possible. Yet, herein lies the church's commitment to transforming biased and prejudicial attitudes. Challenges abound, but "the obstacles, though real, should not lead us to underestimate the possibilities of dialogue or to overlook the results already achieved" (54).

Positively, dialogue requires "a balanced attitude" that is "open and

receptive" and it demands "unselfishness and impartiality, acceptance of differences and of possible contradictions. The will to engage together in commitment to the truth and the readiness to allow oneself to be transformed by the encounter are other dispositions required" (47).

Dialogue does not mean the abandonment of one's religious convictions. On the contrary, one enters dialogue precisely as a religious person; "the sincerity of interreligious dialogue requires that each enters into it with the integrity of his or her own faith" (48).

Christians accept God's self-manifestation to the followers of other religious traditions; thus, Jesus' followers experience that "Far from weakening their own faith, true dialogue will deepen it. Their faith will gain new dimensions as they discover the active presence of the mystery of Jesus Christ beyond the visible boundaries of the Church and of the Christian fold" (50). Dialogue requires nothing less than radical attitudinal conversion (47-54, 83); "an unending process" (49); it demands commitment and transformation.

DIALOGUE VIS-A-VIS PROCLAMATION

After an introduction which contextualizes the debate (1-13), the document gives a lengthy treatment to "interreligious dialogue" (14-54) and to "proclaiming Jesus Christ" (55-76). Dialogue and proclamation are then studied in their mutual relationships (77-86). A brief conclusion rounds out the presentation (87-89).

A few descriptive passages capture the current understanding of the dynamics of the dialogue-proclamation relationship. Though not on the same level, both are "authentic elements of the Church's evangelizing mission. Both are legitimate and necessary. They are intimately related, but not interchangeable: true interreligious dialogue on the part of the Christian supposes the desire to make Jesus Christ better known, recognized and loved; proclaiming Jesus Christ is to be

loved; proclaiming Jesus Christ is to be carried out in the Gospel spirit of dialogue" (77).

Dynamics Of The Relationship

"All Christians are called to be personally involved in these two ways of carrying out the one mission of the Church, namely proclamation and dialogue. They must nevertheless always bear in mind that dialogue, as has already been said, does not constitute the whole mission of the Church. It cannot simply replace proclamation, but remains oriented towards proclamation in so far as the dynamic process of the Church's evangelizing mission reaches in it, its climax and its fullness" (82).

Holding dialogue and proclamation in a harmonious, fruitful tension is a delicate balancing act, yet, that is precisely what local churches and missionaries are asked to achieve (43, 78, 82). There are clear obstacles to be faced both in dialogue (51-54) as well as in proclamation (72-74). Evangelizers through prayer and the Eucharist will be able to "draw the grace of discernment, to be able to read the signs of the Spirit's presence and to recognize the favorable time and right manner of proclaiming Jesus Christ" (86).

Conversion

The reality of conversion is best understood as a dynamic process on two levels. Mission always includes a call to open one's heart to an experience of the living God (11, 41). This call is to all peoples, Christians included (32). Based on this general or foundational conversion, one may also be called in conscience "to leave one's previous spiritual or religious situation" (41), "to a change of religious adherence" (11). Today's evangelizers need great sensitivity in interpreting the workings of God's grace in their own lives and in the lives of the followers of other faiths.

The Holy Spirit

Current mission rightly places important emphasis on the theology of the

Holy Spirit. John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* devoted an entire chapter to "The Holy Spirit, the Principle Agent of Mission." *Dialogue and Proclamation* continues this theme. In God's loving plan of salvation, the universal action of the Holy Spirit is operative in the world, and interreligious dialogue becomes an important key to discovering the spirit's befriending presence.

Dialogue of Salvation: Paul VI

An important concept of Paul VI, a truly missionary pope, appears in several places in this document. Affirming the centrality of dialogue in the church's mission, Paul VI always spoke of interreligious interaction as a "dialogue of salvation" (38-39, 67, 80). When peoples of diverse faiths interact to search for the divine will, God is in dialogue with these believers; thus, "interreligious dialogue is truly part of the dialogue of salvation initiated by God" (80). Current efforts in dialogue affirm that "God, in an age-long dialogue, has offered and continues to offer salvation to humankind" (38; cf. 53). One special quote from Vatican II has gained ascendancy in current papal teaching on mission and dialogue. "We are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this Paschal Mystery in a manner known to God" (15, 28, 68 and GS 22).

God's Patience

A special theme common to the two documents on Dialogue (1984 and 1991) focuses on the "patience of God" in the church's commitment to dialogue. "Much patience is required" (53) to engage in dialogue and proclamation! "All, both Christians and the followers of other religious traditions, are invited by God himself to enter into the mystery of his patience" (84, and the 1984 document, No. 44). Any seasoned missionary, particularly in the Asian context, will attest to the validity of this insight.

(Fr. James H. Kroeger is the Asia-Pacific Assistant of the Maryknoll General Council. This article has been slightly shortened due to pressure of space - Ed.)

A SIMPLE METHOD OF BIBLE SHARING

Fr. Ortkemper

Introduction

I. The Group

Four to six persons who in trust, openness and respect listen in common to the Word of God, and try to answer it; persons who on the basis of the Word of God, through mutual self-communication, try to find their way towards a deeper Christian community.

II. The Atmosphere

For Bible sharing, a quiet atmosphere is really necessary. That is:

Freedom from noise, thus a place where the group can meet undisturbed,

Freedom from time pressure, thus sufficient time should be available, (according to experience, a group of five people needs about 45-60 minutes for this method).

The participants sit in an open circle (not around a table), so that each one can not only hear the others but also see them.

A burning candle in the midst reminds the participants that Christ, the Word of God, is the light of the world (Jn. 1,1.9; 8,12; 12,46) and that he is present in the midst of those gathered in his name (Mt. 8,20). All of this helps towards creating the right atmosphere.

III. The Group Facilitator

He or she need not be an expert, because it is not his/her task to convey actual knowledge. Their task rather is to lead the group in the Bible sharing by announcing the individual steps of the method. He/she may also lead the opening and closing prayer, or may ask

for a volunteer. He/she may invite someone in the group only to read, but not to share.

IV. The Bible and the Scripture Text

It is advisable, but not absolutely necessary, that all members have a copy of the Bible in the same translation. It is recommended to take one of the three readings of the Sunday liturgy for this Bible sharing.

V. The Method

The group decides on the model they will use (prayer - response, action - response, or a combination of both) before beginning each session.

It is recommended to use the model prayer - response for the first few times, and then the group may choose to go on to the action - response. After that, the two may be used alternately.

TWO MODELS

MODEL A PRAYER - RESPONSE

Opening Prayer or Song

The participants will try to become aware of God's presence. Jesus said "Where there are two or three gathered in my name, there I am in their midst." (Mt. 18,20). Also a prayer of petition would be appropriate according to the words of Scripture, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening" (1 Sm 3,10) or "You have words of eternal life" (Jn.6,68); or a petition to the Holy Spirit who can open our ears and free us from everything that would hinder

us from hearing God's Word; or a hymn to the Holy Spirit, "Come Holy Spirit", etc.

First Step

First contact with the TEXT, with the "dead letter".

Reading of the text - One member of the group reads it aloud, the others participate by listening, and/or reading it silently.

Silence - After the reading, all observe silence for about three minutes, during which they go over the text once more. They choose a word or words, phrase or phrases, verse or verses that strike them.

Sharing - After about three minutes, the facilitator invites the group members to share the word or words, phrase or phrases, verse or verses that struck them. They are not to give any explanation, only a striking word, phrase or verse with the corresponding verse number. For example, "I was struck by the word 'light' in verse 5" (in 1 Jn.1). No explanation is given, nor the reason why this particular word, phrase or verse is very striking.

Second Step

The "dead letter" of Scripture becomes the living WORD for me (and perhaps, through me, for others as well).

Reading of the same text - After all have shared upon the invitation of the facilitator, another member reads the same text aloud. The others again participate silently.

Silence - and listening to the WORD for me (about 5 minutes) - After the reading all observe deep silence for about five minutes, during which each member listens intently to God's personal message to him/her. Prompted by the text and/or the sharing of the other group members, something will emerge as most meaningful to each group member, and true to their own experience or applicable to their own lives. While listening, the participants ask themselves, "What do you, God,

want to tell me personally for my very concrete life?".

Sharing of the Word for me with the others - After about five minutes the facilitator invites the group members to share what they have heard in the depths of their heart. In order to keep the sharing on a personal level and to refrain from moralizing, they will try to use only the first person singular (I, me, my, mine). It is a matter of simple sharing, not of discussion nor of preaching in the sense of moralizing. The word of Pope Paul VI may be recorded here "Is there any other way of handing on the Gospel, than by transmitting to another person one's personal experience of faith? (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*)

Third Step

The WORD demands a RESPONSE

Reading of the same text - After all have shared, another member of the group reads the text a third time, while the others listen and/or read silently.

Silence and personal answer to the WORD - After the reading the group observes deep silence once again, during which each person tries to answer what has been perceived as the personal Word of God. There ought to be a real correspondence between the Word and the answer, for instance, expressing one's trust if the Word was a promise, one's obedience if it was a command. The prayer could also be praise and thanks, repentance, petition, intercession, depending on the message received.

Sharing of the personal prayer response - I express aloud the personal answer of my heart to the Word I have received, so that it may be confirmed through the Amen, (expressed or in silence) of the other participants.

Concluding Prayer or Song

A prayer of praise or thanks, a song or the Lord's Prayer recited by the group together, fits very well as a conclusion to the common Bible Sharing.

MODEL B ACTION - RESPONSE

Opening Prayer or Song

First Step: same as in Model A - prayer and response.

Second Step: same as in Model A - prayer and response.

Third Step

The WORD demands an ANSWER. As in Model A - reading of the text, prayer - response.

Silence and personal answer to the Word (about 5 minutes): Hear I ask myself (or I ask God) how I can put into action in the concrete circumstances of my life the Word that I have received.

Sharing of the personal action response: Each participant shares with the others how he/she wants to live the Word. Bible sharing groups, which form a natural community (family, religious community, classmates, colleagues at work or office etc.), could try to reach conclusions on how they, in common, as a community, could try to live their answer.

Closing Prayer

Same as in Model A - prayer and response

EXPLANATION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE METHOD

1. The Three Steps: TEXT - WORD - RESPONSE

The TEXT is the objective form of the Word of God, independent from myself and given to ME. God speaks first, he takes the initiative.

The WORD of God is a personal Word, a Word from person to person. It is addressed to me and it is spoken to me, and I am at stake. It strikes me and it means me.

Whenever God speaks to me I have to answer, his Word demands my ANSWER. Thus, a dialogue is opened up, in prayer and in life.

II. The Reading of the Same Text Three Times

The advantage of a common reading aloud of the text or letting it ring in my ears, should not be underestimated. For that reason, the reading should never be reduced to once or twice in order to gain time.

- In this way the text sinks in better.

- Also, people who are unable to read, or have difficulties with reading (children, analphabets, the blind, handicapped) can thus participate.

- Though the text remains the same, the understanding of it is deepened step by step. With each new reading of the text, all that has been shared is heard once again.

- Through reading the text three times, it is referred to time and again, so that during and after our sharing, we stay with the text and orientate ourselves to it.

- Finally, through the three fold reading, we express our conviction that faith comes through hearing, and the inspired text is more important and more significant than whatever we may say in the sharing.

III. Triple Silence

The minutes of silence are of great importance. They are the bridge from reading to sharing.

- The minutes passed silently are not a time of passive waiting for the sharing to begin, but moments of the deepest personal activity. Unless the Bible sharing emerges from silence and a personal encounter of the Word, it easily drifts into mere chatting.

- Only in quiet and silence are we able to listen to the text, to listen to whatever emerges in our hearts, and to listen to what the others have to say. It is therefore recommendable to remain in silence even after the sharing of each person in order to listen to the echo of what has been said and to let it sink in.

- The time suggested for silence is not to be measured with a stop watch, it is to be understood as an approximation. In groups who have become used to this method the times of silence are rather longer than shorter.

- As to what happens in the silence of the second step-letting God speak

about a concentration of wealth, power, and military might; that means of communication were in the hands of a few from the rich countries; that the world is now dominated by one superpower the U.S.A. and its allies. The collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe added to the hopelessness of the situation. In countries open to the incursion of capitalism, a socialist alternative seemed no longer feasible.

The Assembly analysed in greater depth the collapse of Socialism in the West (i.e. Eastern Europe). This and the disintegration of the Soviet Union were seen as not merely an inability of centrally planned socialism to compete in productivity with free enterprise capitalism, but also as due to the demand for democratic freedom and for independence by the new republics of the Soviet Union, with their different ethnic and religious groups. Socialism in Eastern Europe had been imposed by their communist parties with Soviet support.

On the other hand, socialist economies still prevail in China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam. Socialism, with a limited openness to private enterprise may have a future, despite the crisis of democracy and participation in these countries. But the overwhelming dominance of the capitalistic powers indicated to the participants that at the present time there were no clear alternative social structures to the free market system in most of the rest of the modern world.

Resistance to Injustice

Reports from all over witnessed to the people's struggle for survival and active resistance to injustice. In recent decades new groups have begun to organize themselves and assert their rights. Prominent among these are women, Blacks, indigenous people, tribals, Dalits and environmental and peace movements.

Peoples' movements which relate to the felt issues of people are a sign of hope for the future. The convergence into mass movements of people-power has brought about radical changes in governments and the social order (as in

the Philippines, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe).

Spirituality

The cry of the people for life demonstrates their active struggle for their due rights and position in the world; this is a spiritual response to a desperate situation based on the conviction that God is a God of justice and that the poor and marginalized will ultimately triumph through their united efforts.

The people's appropriation of the Bible and a return to the Jesus of faith are seen as inspirations for liberation, far more potent than traditional speculative theology with an emphasis on defined dogmas. In some sense, the Bible itself was seen as both a problem as well as an inspiration for the people's struggle. George Soares from India emphasized the need to focus more on the mystery of the Divine that inspires a spirituality of commitment rather than on the mechanisms of traditional spirituality that can become a matter of routine.

Christology and Bible

American-Indian participants from both North and South America brought in a point of view on religion and life in general that was seriously heard for the first time at an EATWOT assembly. George Tinker presented a radical critique of the western view of science, knowledge and the Divine. This, along with the hermeneutical questioning of accepted dogmatic orthodoxies by the other regions and by women led to the Assembly posing critical issues concerning Christology and the Bible. While there was no overall consensus at the Assembly, the Bible was seen as one of the revelations of God, alongside the first revelation in creation itself and the other scriptures and manifestations of the Divine.

An inclusive Christology was accepted as essential in our multi-religious context. Former rigidly exclusive approaches were seen to be a cause of much religious tension competition and wars. The Bible study enacted by the

Asian Group confirmed this perspective. In earlier EATWOT Assemblies there was a reluctance to accept these themes for discussion due to the sensitivities in some areas. This time, the insights of indigenous religions of the American-Indians and the Afro-Caribbean and other South American cults powerfully confirmed the thrust of non-exclusivity that comes from Asia and Africa. This seemed almost a late compensation for the exaggerations of the missionary approach of the post-1492 era.

Repentance

Repentance, expressed symbolically at the concluding liturgy was another indication of progress and convergence in thought when men asked forgiveness from women, whites from the rest of the world and groups within one continent from other groups within it. All contributed financially as a gesture of solidarity with and reparation to the deeply exploited host-continent, Africa.

Participants agreed that while Capitalism appeared to offer no hope for the poor and the weak everywhere, there was no clear model of one social system or structure that would meet human needs integrally. The overall values of justice, equality, freedom, peace, participation and mutuality were essential in any social order. They are the criteria for evaluating existing social systems and the goals to be sought in the required social changes. The future has to be constructed while trying to correct the evils in each and any situation.

Recommendations for Action

Among the recommendations for action were the linking with peoples' movements that strive to realize such goals. National and international efforts are needed to control ruling elites and international companies that dominate whole countries and even the world scene. The reform of the international agencies such as the UN, the IMF and the World Bank were seen as essential for the common good of all, especially the oppressed. Alongside action for change within societies, Christian churches and religions too, need to change as they take their due place on the side of justice, equality and freedom for all.

Commemoration of the 500 years of European expansion into the rest of the world since 1492 and the proposals for a so called "New World Order" provide an occasion for a new evaluation of historical relations, repentance for faults and compensation for the victimized people.

These are some of the tasks to which EATWOT theologians, with faith in the Spirit ever present and active in the world, committed themselves for the coming year. We trust that the organized power of the people, resisting the illusion of the so called "New World Order", will help usher in a new dawn when peoples' power triumphs over exploitation. May it take us all towards a more human world in which all will live in harmony.

Ref. AMECEA Documentation Service,
No. 357, January 1992.
P.O. Box 21400, Nairobi, Kenya.

MESSE AUX SUFFRAGES DES VICTIMES Du 16 Février 1992 A KINSHASA-ZAIRE

DANS LA BASILIQUE DE S. PAUL, ROME, DIMANCHE 23 FEVRIER

Homélie du Léonard Kasanda Lumembu, CICM. Conseiller Général

(The following homily was given by Fr. L. Kasanda Lumembu, General Councillor of the Scheut Missionary Society, at a solemn Mass celebrated in the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls, Rome on Sunday, February 23, 1992. A very large number of Zairean laity, religious and priests and of past and present missionaries to Zaire attended the Mass which was celebrated in memory of those killed and injured in Kinshasa on Sunday, February 16, when army units attacked a defenseless procession. Catholic, Protestant and Kimbanguist Churches had joined in a procession for peace following their Sunday Church services.

The army brutality was condemned world wide. In a television broadcast shown on BBC the Zairean government minister responsible for the army attempted to blame Church leaders for the massacre, alleging that Catholic Bishops had been influenced by liberation theology from Latin America. He promised however to purge the army of dissident and indisciplined elements allegedly responsible for the action.

SEDOS Executive Committee has sent a message of sympathy and support to Mgr. Ignace Matondo-Kwa-Nzambi, Bishop of Basankusu, Vice President and President of the Zairean Episcopal Conference; to the President of the Association of Major Superiors of Men in Zaire; and to the President of the Union of Major Superiors of Women in Zaire - Ed).

Chers Frères et Soeurs

La Parole que le Seigneur vient de nous adresser en ce 7^e dimanche de l'année nous trouve avec des coeurs tristes et saignants. Et, il y a de quoi. Nous avons tous appris les événements tragiques qui se sont produits à Kinshasa le dimanche 16 février au courant desquels des dizaines de personnes, des croyants protestants, kimbanguistes et catholiques, ont trouvé la mort - et plusieurs autres s'en sont tirés avec des blessures graves - devant les sanctuaires d'où ils sortaient pour faire "la marche de l'espoir". La première réaction que j'ai eu personnellement fut d'une profonde indignation. Pourquoi encore cette tuerie, à qui profite-t-elle? Était-ce l'unique manière

de résoudre des problèmes et de faire respecter des lois?

Ceux qui sont tombés, en effet, n'étaient pas des soldats armés, capables de se défendre. C'était des pères et mères de familles et même un enfant de 7 ans, de simples gens que le courage de la foi avait tirés de l'anonymat et provoqués au témoignage chrétien. Ils n'avaient dans leurs mains que des chapelets, des bibles, de petites croix et des effigies de la Vierge Marie et des bidons d'eau bénite. Leur intention était de prier pour la paix et la justice et pour obtenir la reconnaissance des droits primordiaux de l'homme au bonheur, à la paix, au développement. Leur unique crime pour lequel ils ont été condamnés à mort a

été d'avoir suivi leur conscience de chrétiens et d'avoir voulu être la voix des sans-voix et l'espérance d'une population intimidée.

On le sait, ils n'ont pas pu marcher comme ils l'avaient voulu; ils n'ont pas pu prier; ils n'ont pas pu parler. La mort et les mauvais traitements qui les attendaient hors des églises et des temples ont étouffé pour un moment leur voix. Mais dans notre foi, nous croyons fermement que la mort et la résurrection de Jésus-Christ qu'ils venaient de célébrer quelques instants avant les ont fait passer des misères à la plénitude de la vie et que leur sacrifice portera ses fruits.

Pendant que la révolution gronde dans nos coeurs et que ceux-ci saignent abondamment, ces événements tristes deviennent aussi une sérieuse interpellation pour chaque zaïrois et chaque zaïroise et pour tout homme de bonne volonté. Le Pape Jean-Paul II ne cesse de rappeler à notre monde d'aujourd'hui la dignité de l'homme. Sa pensée peut se résumer dans une simple phrase: "l'homme n'est pas un objet dont on se sert, mais un semblable qu'on doit respecter dans sa vie et avec qui on est appelé à entrer dans le dialogue respectueux pour la vie". Tant que l'homme sera assimilé à un objet qu'on se permet d'utiliser à ses propres fins, il subira le sort de cet objet qu'on n'aime que lorsqu'il satisfait nos intérêts égoïstes et qu'on se permet de jeter au dépotoir s'il réclame d'être aimé parce qu'il est un homme.

On n'aimera l'homme véritablement que le jour où l'on acceptera que Dieu nous renseigne sur la dignité dont il lui-même revêtu. Or cela n'est pas possible dans des sociétés dont les options politiques mettent Dieu de côté. C'est ce qu'avaient proclamé les prêtres de Kinshasa, dans leur message du 21 février dernier. Ils écrivaient:

"Combien il est triste de devoir constater que les opinions politiques prises par notre société l'ont été pour une société sans Dieu. D'où la suppression des cours de religion, une mauvaise conception de la laïcité, l'inversion des

valeurs, le retour aux pratiques fétichistes, le paganisme et le culte de la personnalité.

Tout cela nous a enfoncés dans un sous-développement matériel et mental tel que le pays est devenu un Zaïre véritablement sinistré...

En désobéissant à Dieu nous avons fait l'expérience du mal et nous n'arrivons plus à supporter ses conséquences néfastes...

Cette expérience prouve une fois de plus que lorsque les hommes s'essayent à construire un monde selon des principes exclusivement humains, ils en sont pour leur propres frais... Le Pape Paul VI n'a-t-il pas dit dans 'Populorum progressio' que si les hommes sont capables de construire un monde sans Dieu, ce monde se retournera immanquablement contre eux" (no. 1).

Cette affirmation en appelle une autre. Le monde dans lequel nous vivons et qui est un admirable cadeau de Dieu, c'est à l'homme qu'il a été confié pour le rendre plus beau et plus agréable encore. Il contient tout ce dont chacun a besoin pour être heureux sur terre. Mais l'avènement de ce bonheur est attaché à l'engagement de tous, un engagement qui va dans le sens du bien, un engagement qui lutte contre le mal, même jusqu'au don de sa vie pour le bonheur des autres. Le Christ lui-même ne l'a-t-il pas dit: "Heureux ceux qui ont faim et soif de la justice... Heureux les artisans de paix..." (Mt.5,6.9.) et encore "il n'y a pas de plus grand amour que de donner sa vie pour ses amis?" (Jn.15,13). Ceux qui sont tombés n'ont voulu faire que cela. Que pourrait faire un enfant de 7 ans contre quelqu'un qui porte une arme de mort. Il voulait seulement clamer son droit à la vie, à une vie humaine. Mais on ne l'a pas écouté. Mais il est mort pour que les survivants, ceux de sa génération surtout, puissent enfin jouir de cette paix et de cette liberté démocratique qui lui ont été refusées. Le message cité plus haut le dit aussi:

"...comme toujours Dieu travaille avec les hommes, se servant de leur faible nature pour manifester sa gloire. Aujourd'hui il veut sauver le Zaïre sinistré en se servant des Zaïrois. Le

salut que Dieu veut apporter se trouve dans le changement. Il s'appelle conversion, retour à Dieu. Hors de Lui, il n'y a pas de salut. C'est à ce changement que Dieu nous invite aujourd'hui: changement des coeurs et de l'esprit, changement des structures" (no. 2).

A ce niveau, je me sens obligé de retourner à la parole que le Seigneur vient de nous adresser ce dimanche. Il nous invite au changement et à la conversion. L'aveuglement du coeur causé par la souffrance pourrait nous mener aux sentiments de haine et de vengeance. Rappelons-nous que la mort des innocents crie vengeance au ciel. Ce n'est pas à nous qu'il revient de juger, de condamner, de faire justice. Le Seigneur qui sonde les coeurs et qui connaît les motivations secrètes qu'il renferme fera justice à ceux qu'on a abattus injustement. A nous aujourd'hui il dit:

"aimez vos ennemis, faites du bien à ceux qui vous haïssent..., souhaitez du bien à ceux qui vous maudissent..., priez pour ceux qui vous calomnient..., soyez miséricordieux..., ne jugez pas, ne condamnez pas..., donnez toujours pleinement et vous recevrez une mesure bien pleine" (Lc. 6,27-38).

C'est un langage qu'on pourrait qualifier de "cruel" en ces circonstances où la haine risque d'habiter nos coeurs et la vengeance semble être la récompense de ceux qui ont perpétré ce mal. Mais cela c'est la justice humaine qui finit par diviser les

peuples et enfoncer les nations dans une escalade interminable de violence. La voie que le Seigneur nous propose aujourd'hui est la vraie qui mène à la paix et à la justice véritables. Le jour où cet enseignement du Seigneur informera nos attitudes et nos pensées, ce jour-là "justice fleurira et paix couvrira nos collines" (Ps.72,7). Et donc pendant que nous déplorons ces événements tragiques, laissons-nous aussi emporter vers le témoignage que le message chrétien propose: celui d'une conversion véritable qui aligne nos pensées sur celles de Dieu et transforme nos actions en sources de vie pour les autres.

Et maintenant, frères et soeurs, poursuivons notre célébration eucharistique. Nos pensées vont d'abord à ceux qui ont donné leur vie pour l'avènement d'une société plus humaine au Zaïre. Nous demandons aussi au Seigneur que les nombreux blessés se rétablissent rapidement. Nous chargeons le Dieu de toute consolation d'être auprès des maris qui ont perdu leur épouse, des épouses qui ont perdu leur mari, des enfants qui ont perdu leurs père ou leur mère, des parents qui ont perdu leur enfant, et ici nous pensons spécialement aux parents de cet enfant de 7 ans. Nous portons à l'autel les aspirations légitimes de la nation zaïroise aujourd'hui endeuillée et traumatisée. Et nous demandons pour tous la grâce d'une conversion véritable qui mène vers l'éclosion d'une société plus juste et plus humaine. Amen.



mission moments

YOMAWARI NIGHT PATROL

(JAPAN)

Every Wednesday evening, we gather for YOMAWARI (night patrol). In winter we bring food, clothes, blankets and hand-warmers for the homeless. We help them to get enough medical care. But those are only the emergency measures. What are we doing? Before answering this question, I'd like to introduce some people I met.

Sugiyama lost both his family and his job as a result of the atom bomb, and became a coal miner in Kyushu. But the coal industry was crippled during the shift in the energy policy from coal to oil. He lost his job again and worked as a day labourer for the construction industry in Hiroshima. Now he is more than seventy years old and it is hard for him to get a job. So, he is sleeping on a bench in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

Takahashi came back from Sagharien to Hokkaido after the war. He had two serious traffic accidents. He was frost-bitten and had his toes cut off.

Oda is proud of his long career as a TOBI (scaffolding man). One day he noticed that he could not see clearly. He found he had a brain tumor. He will be blind soon. We met him drinking SAKE (Japanese rice wine) alone in the station.

Those people are called FUROSHA (vagrants) or LUMPEN (tramps). We often say, "They are dirty!" "They are lazy by nature." "They are dangerous." Sometimes children throw stones and frustrated businessmen give them kicks.

In Hiroshima, most day labourers are aged, ill or handicapped. They are "used" and then "thrown away". They are forced to NOJUKU (sleep in the open). So, we call them NOJUKU RODOSHA (homeless labourers) not "tramps". Most of them are single and male. They are cut off from family life; in this sense they are really "homeless".

Usually day labourers stay in a flophouse called DOYA, here rent is paid by the day. Those who have been out of work for weeks and cannot even afford to use the DOYA, commonly spend the night in the street.

In the 19th century, homeless wanderers were arrested and kept in a YOSEBA. They were pressed into services as labour for land reclama-

tion and flood control projects. Therefore, YOSEBA came to be the name for a center or a market where labourers live and seek work by the day.

There are three large YOSEBA in Japan: Kamagasaki in Osaka, Kotobuki in Yokohama and Sanya in Tokyo. Smaller YOSEBA are scattered all over Japan, attached to major cities like Hiroshima.

After World War II, the YOSEBA system was revived in the late 1950's, answering the needs of Japan's rapid capitalist growth. Then as now, their role was to supply cheap labour on a daily basis to the construction, shipbuilding and manufacturing industries. Those industries have tended to avoid the responsibility of a large permanent workforce, relying instead on the day labourers who can be taken on and discarded at will. The main source of day labourers has been the poor villages in remote rural areas of Japan notably Hokkaido and Okinawa.

At about five or six in the morning, the workers gather on the streets, waiting for recruiters, known as TEHAISHI, to arrive with offers of work.

The employers are usually giant construction companies

such as Kajima, Takenaka or Obayashi, or local governments. But between them and the TEHAISHI are two or three (or more) intermediate subcontractors.

These serve to distance the principal employer from certain illegal practices, such as verbal contracts and inadequate working conditions. They also milk the labourers' wages.

Generally TEHAISHI are YAKUZA - Japan's Mafia - or are closely linked to them. That is why the labourers silently bear their bitter experiences of unjust labour practices. And it also makes it difficult for us to support them.

The labourers move from one YOSEBA to another in search of work. We will have the Asian Sport Olympics in Hiroshima in 1993. Hiroshima city will spend more than 300 billion yen for the buildings and the new traffic system. We will see more and more NOJUKU RODOSHA around us.

Ref. Sr. Masako Miyake, SND
Notre Dame Seishin High School, Hiroshima.

A PASTORAL EXPERIMENT (ECUADOR)

We set foot in Esmeraldas Libre for the first time on Sunday, May 8, 1990. We wanted to rent a little house, but people told us it was not possible without first asking the president of the local cooperative.

There are 8 streets within the territory of the coopera-

tive and we immediately noticed the difference. On the first five streets there are more white people and both the houses and the pavement are of better quality. On the back streets there are more blacks and the homes are rather shabby. These streets are known also as the place where thieves, murderers and drug addicts live. We chose a house on the seventh street....

From the very beginning we looked for a job that would pay for living expenses and keep us close to the neighbours. So we started selling milk and soya bean tortillas. The job has many advantages: it keeps us busy only four hours a day (from 5.30 to 9.30 in the morning), it gives us the chance to provide people with substantial food at very low prices. Selling in the streets allows us to meet lots of people that we would not be able to meet as priests....

On Sunday we have Mass with about 20 women and a meeting with about 25 children. On Saturday we have Rosary and a Bible course attended by about 10 people. These are all activities that have been asked for by the people. We think that about 20,000 people live within the parish. Many of them come from Esmeraldas. The barrio was started in 1982, when people took over a swamp, cut the bushes and built about 4,000 houses on stilts stuck in the mud....

Politicians never venture in this area. The place is run by Toral Zalamea, who was in jail for a time and kept on running the place through his friends, whom people call "the magnificent five."

People live in fear and cannot speak their mind. No one owns houses and land. There are no papers, so people live here at the mercy of this "boss", who can keep them or send them off at will.

We have a chapel made of reeds sitting on the water, about 100 feet from the shore. With our immediate neighbours we are developing a true friendship. Gathering to buy water and the little things we borrow or lend brings us very close to the people. We plan to continue this way for a while, meeting the families, listening without proposing anything, but trying to stimulate proposals from them. We hope that the little group that gathers for Bible study will eventually be the seed and provide the leadership for future activities.

We try to evangelize by being with the people. We have decided not to accept money from outside. In fact we are convinced that the "option for the poor" does not consist in being the channel of money from the rich to the poor, but rather in staying with the poor, facing their problems with them in unity and with poor means.

We are in the process of establishing contacts with other pastoral experiences in different parts of Guayaquil and with parishioners that have the experience of Base Communities. We lead people gently but without pressure, respecting the pace of the people and leaving time for growth.

Ref:
Fr. Franco Nascimbene, MCCJ,
Bro. Fernando Luginis, MCCJ,
in *New People*, Nov. 1991.

AT THE SERVICE OF
LIFE AND HOPE

(BRAZIL)

At a recent meeting in Brazil the Permanent Council of the Brazilian Bishops conference (CNBB) released a document about the country's current crisis entitled "At the Service of Life and Hope".

"...The crisis is overwhelmingly evident in the recession, in the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, in low salaries, inadequate housing, growing unemployment and marginalization... We attest to the deterioration of health, housing and education services, and to increased hunger, forced migration of workers, indigenous rights violations and the murder of children," the bishops' document says. "This situation is made worse by ever-increasing corruption that destroys society's sense of well-being."

"At the Service of Life and Hope" is one of the CNBB's strongest documents. The document called on Christian communities to "carry out acts of solidarity along with the poorest peoples." The bishops state: "We support the just demand of the poor, as a sign of commitment to the God of Life."

"We Central American

Catholics are pained by the corruption that pervades all areas of life and the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of the most detestable crimes. Almost inadvertently, we have internalized a 'culture of death'. We have become accustomed to living amid horrible violence, and the most shocking massacres and crimes have started to leave us indifferent."

Ref. Information No. 1
January 1992, OFM. 5300
Bonn Albertus-Magnus-Str.39

AN EXPERIENCE IN LITERACY

(SENEGAL)

This past year was the beginning of a project in functional literacy.

In 1989 during an updating we were made aware that through serious study and research it has been proven that the first criteria for health improvement is the level of literacy that adult and young women have attained.

The nurses already have so much to do that to accept something that would have to be added on to all the rest was truly asking a lot. But given the fact that literacy is a human right and an urgent necessity the idea found acceptance because of

the numbers of mothers and young women who are illiterate, and also a certain number of health workers, although well-prepared and competent, had never had a chance to be educated.

Objectives to be Obtained

This project of functional literacy concerns adults. Its first objective is to develop an integrated health policy.

Ten health centres were chosen for the first experiment according to the requests of the people. A total of 14 literacy teachers were prepared for 10 centres.

Our objectives for the period between 1991-1994 are:

1. Reach 30 health centres out of the existing 72;
2. Prepare 45 teachers in literacy in Wolof, Sereer, Diola, and French;
3. Alphabetise 2,800 adults in the national languages: Wolof, Sereer, and Diola;
4. Alphabetise 400 adults in French;
5. Produce materials for literacy and post-literacy;
6. Research activities for post-literacy.

(62.6% men and 82% women are illiterate in Senegal. According to the 1988 census 43.6% of children are attending primary school.)

UNUS Sr. Simone Chatelier,
Marist Missionary Sisters'
Bulletin, Feb. 1992 Vol 22,
No.1.

UNMASKING THE IDOLS

Speaker: Fr. Virgilio Elizondo

Friday March 20, 1992; 9.00 - 12.45 p.m. Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane

Fax or phone 574.13.50 or write to SEDOS.

ZAIRE UPDATE: March 23, 3.30 p.m. at SVD College

FUNDAMENTALISM IN ISLAM

Speaker: TOM MICHEL, SJ

March 26, 1992; 3.30 - 6.00 p.m. at SVD College

HAITI UPDATE: March 30, 3.30 p.m. at SVD College

WOMENS' CONCERNS: WOMEN BELIEVING

March 31, 3.30 - 6.00 p.m. at SEDOS Secretariat

THE CHALLENGE TO RELIGIOUS WITNESSING TO THE GOSPEL IN THE AMERICAS IN THE 90's

Speaker: Alejandro Angulo, SJ

April 18, 9.00 - 5.30 p.m. Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane

A Justice and Peace Day. Fax or phone 662 2929

5TH CENTENARY - A NEW AGENDA

VILLA CAVALLETTI 19 - 23 May, 1992

FR. GUSTAVO GUTIERREZ
S. MARIA CLARA LUCCHETTI BINGEMER

(Early registration is recommended)
