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CONTENTS

IN THIS ISSUE 62

AFRICAN ANTHROPOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
Simon S. Maimela 63

CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS IN A NEW EUROPE
Norman Solomon 68

LIBERIA: THE FORGOTTEN WAR
Dain Inglis, FDNCS 77

TOWARD 1997: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HONG KONG
John Tong 81

MISSION MOMENTS
Refugees - The Netherlands • Sharing Hope - Taiwan • Reaching Out -
United States • Health Care - Liberia 89

COMING EVENTS 92

IN THIS ISSUE

In his article, *African Anthropology and Christian Theology*, SIMON S. MAIMELA explores the contribution of African Traditional Religions to Christian Theology. He compares the Western approach to "individualistic sins of the heart, the inevitable rottenness of human life and human hopelessness in the face of social sins" with the African belief that "a human being is human only because of others, with others and for others." The approach he takes links belief in God with the quality of human, societal relationships.

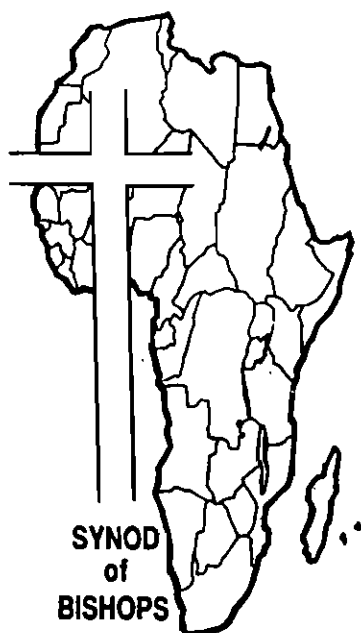
In the landscape of today's Europe anti-semitism and ethnic violence have reared their ugly heads. *Christian-Jewish Relations in a New Europe*, by Rabbi NORMAN SOLOMAN, presents anti-semitism as the classical instance, in Western culture, of the process of separation and hatred between groups

because it combines both of these elements.

Following the deaths of 5 American members of the Congregation of the Adorers of the Precious Blood, the world press "forgot" Liberia. SR. DAIN INGLIS, FDNSC reminds us of the human costs of civil war in *Liberia: The Forgotten War*.

As the Catholics of Hong Kong move toward 1997, they are increasingly aware of their complex identity: as Chinese, as citizens of Hong Kong and as Catholics - members of a universal Church. Father JOHN TONG, Vicar General of the Diocese of Hong Kong, examines this three-fold identity in *Toward 1997: The Catholic Church In Hong Kong*.

This issue of the Bulletin concludes with Mission Moments and Coming Events.



How will the Church in Africa undertake "her Evangelising Mission Towards the Year 2000"?

How will African Christians truly become "witnesses" (cf. *Acts 1:8*) to Christ and to his salvation in the midst of their brothers and sisters?

What initiatives and tasks are called for in the troubled situation of the continent in order to bring to bear this salvation and liberation?

Ref. *Instrumentum Laboris*.

Synod of Bishops:

Special Assembly for Africa

AFRICAN ANTHROPOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Simon S. Maimela

(Simon S. Maimela is the EATWOT Coordinator for Africa and an Associate Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of South Africa, Pretoria. What follows is the final section of an article which appeared in the June issue of Voices from the Third World.)

There are millions of Africans in the so called mainline churches for whom African traditional religions are still living realities. Most African Christians have accepted Christianity as taught to them by missionaries and find it attractive in many ways, but they are bothered by the fact that in the historic churches, the reality of witchcraft is explicitly denied despite their experience of it. They are prohibited from consulting diviners and medicine men and women. The existence of spirits, especially ancestral spirits, is called into question and often denied. The consequence is that a large number of

African Christians believe that the Church is not interested in their daily misfortunes: illness, practical problems of evil and witchcraft, bad luck, poverty and barrenness. Rather than reject Christianity altogether, Africans opt to remain both in the Church and at the same time to follow the religious practice of the African traditional religions. Indeed, anyone who has ministered in African parishes will admit that the problem of syncretism is a serious one. Experience shows that many freely mix Christianity and African traditional religions hoping thereby to have the best of both religious worlds.

1. TRADITIONAL WESTERN THEOLOGY

It is an open secret that much of traditional theology, developed from the Augustine-Luther-Calvin tradition, provides an answer to the excessive fear and anxiety that Western people harboured over the problem of death and the individual salvation of the soul in the life hereafter. It is a theology which gives individual sinners assurance about God's forgiveness and therefore about salvation beyond the grave. This theological insight, however important and truthful it might have been, has created more problems for us than it has solved. Among others, it has tended to spiritualize the gospel and to draw a sharp line between the bodily and spiritual needs

of people. Traditional theology has taught oppressed people about the individualistic sins of the heart, the inevitable rottenness of human life in our fallen world, and human hopelessness in the face of social sins - all of which make human brotherhood and sisterhood, even among those who call themselves Christians, unrealizable on this side of the grave. It has refused to focus concretely on sociopolitical and economic relationships.

Two Genesis Stories

Secondly, traditional theology has had the tendency of separating the dramatic stories of Genesis 3 and

Genesis 4. As a result, the sin discussed by much of Western theology revolves around the separation between God and human beings as portrayed in Genesis 3. Not surprisingly, when traditional theology talks about salvation, it talks primarily about the restoring of the broken vertical relationship between God and the individual sinner, thus giving the wrong impression that genuine salvation is possible apart from and in exclusion from the world in which individual sinners live. In my view, traditional theology has committed a serious theological error subordinating horizontal relationships that constitute the second table of the Ten Commandments to the vertical relationships addressed in the first table.

Yet when Jesus was asked: "What is the great commandment in the law?" he flatly refused to be drawn into some kind of theological reductionism that restricted the law only to the human

condition before the righteous God. Rather Jesus reminded his listeners that God's law has a two-fold dimension: The first is that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind. The second, as important as the first, is to love other human beings as ourselves. Jesus was merely restating the summary of God's law as set out in the Torah. In so doing, Jesus reminded his listeners that the vertical and horizontal relationships that are central to Genesis 3 and Genesis 4 should never be separated from one another but instead should be read together, if we are to have a holistic understanding of both sin and salvation.

The tendency in traditional theology to separate these stories has thus given Christians the false impression that it is possible for individuals to be saved and yet continue to oppress and dehumanize their fellow human beings.

2. THE CONTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

This reductionism tends to limit the application and relevance of the gospel to the so-called individual or spiritual sphere. It is claimed that individuals can be saved in the midst of broken human relationships and socio-political injustices in which white oppressors allow people of colour to waste away under the crushing burden of oppression and exploitation. I believe that African anthropology has a contribution to make to Christian theology, because it is human-centred and socially oriented.

Life is Relational

According to this anthropology, individuals are continually reminded that a fulfilling life cannot be had in isolation from others. Rather life is possible only in communal relationships in which individuals try to strike a balance between the private and the social aspects of life, thus maintaining a network of relationships so that every person is pro-

vided with a space to breath and lives a meaningful life. Accordingly, individuals are taught from early childhood, ways and means of pursuing life in such a way that their actions contribute toward the creation and nurturing of a network of multiple relationships. Ultimately, this includes relationships between oneself and the spiritual world of ancestors and God.

To maintain such a network of relationships, it is important to teach people to avoid activities that are injurious to those relationships, actions that threaten to undermine the social fibre and stability of the community. Accordingly, individuals are expected to engage in social and personal activities that enhance communal relationships, thus making life more humane and fulfilling for every person in the community. This human-centred anthropology is best summarized by a saying in Northern Sotho which reminds people that *Motho ke motho ka batho*. This

means that a human being is human only because of others, with others and for others.

Sin and Evil

Furthermore, according to African anthropology, sin and evil are believed to manifest themselves in the human attempt to destroy, to diminish and to threaten the life of others. In consequence, any activity which aims at destroying or injuring others is regarded as a serious evil or sin, because such unloving acts towards fellow human beings are directed ultimately against God, the Creator and source of all life. Put somewhat differently, sin and evil are measured in terms of the life of individuals who suffer injustice, oppression and destruction at the hands of their fellow human beings.

Sin is thus understood more in terms of the breach of loving relationships between human beings. Thus sin manifests itself in the lack of love in interpersonal relationships. It is understood more in terms of the evil that people do or perpetuate against one another than in terms of the human transgression of the divine law against the God-self. In other words, Africans do not think of sin and evil in terms of an abstract legalistic structure through which human beings relate to God either by obeying or disobeying the Supreme Being outside and beyond the social life in which they live. Africans instead find themselves in full agreement with St. John in Jn. 3:17-18; 4:7-21.

Life is One

It should be clear then that African anthropology looks at life wholistically in terms of the multiple relationships in which it is lived. This African perspective on life, which lays greater emphasis on social wrongs and evils, is the one which African Christians should try to offer as their contribution to theological reflection on the great questions of sin and salvation. For it reminds the Church that sin is not only an evil activity which is directed

against God but also has to do with evil deeds which are directed against society. This African perspective concurs with the central biblical thrust which teaches that sin is both a vertical and horizontal reality, because in the final analysis it is not the Almighty, self-sufficient God who suffers at the hand of human exploiters, oppressors, and promoters of injustice in the world.

Human beings are the ones who suffer evil and oppression. Because human beings suffer, God, the Creator of all, is also offended by the deeds of those who perpetrate evil. In the African perspective, sin was correctly understood when it was seen to be committed and perpetrated through human activities that undermine all of life: witchcraft, evil spirits, hatred against others and a refusal to lend help to those in need. All of these threaten to destroy the quality of life for all concerned.

By focusing on the network of relationships in which human beings find themselves, African anthropology can make a contribution to Christian theology. It reminds the Church that what stands at the centre of the message of Scripture is not the vertical relationship of a people to God through the law. Rather, God in both the Old and the New Testaments, is portrayed as the Creator who creates covenants of fellowship with a faithful people. Therefore, at the centre of the covenant is not law and its impossible demands which mortal humans cannot fulfil, but lifegiving relationships between God and human beings, relationships which make life possible. Hence, Adam and Eve sinned not because they broke some lifeless law, but because they undermined and eventually broke the life-giving relationships on which their life depended.

Once this relationship was broken, life could not continue. Rather, they had to suffer the consequences of broken fellowship with their Creator: their friendship and cordial communication with God in the cool of the evening was abruptly terminated. Adam and Eve were alienated from each other. The story of Cain and Abel is but a

continuation of the broken and alienated relationship between God and human beings, and between human beings themselves.

Because sin is largely a matter of a breach of fellowship, African anthropology has a unique role to play, one of helping the Church to make a decisive paradigm shift in the accepted theological focus from a legal structure to a

network of multiple relationships in which human life is lived. In consequence, when any human act begins to disturb, threaten and undermine those relationships, African theologians should challenge the Church to seriously begin to talk about sin on the horizontal level, sin which ultimately is directed against the God who created and continues to uphold those relationships.

3. THE CENTRALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

This theological paradigm shift leads to an important theological consequence: African Christians should encourage theology to move away from a traditional emphasis on individual salvation, hoping thereby to give Christians the assurance of God's forgiveness and eternal life. Anxiety over individual salvation apart from and in exclusion of one's community, which led Luther and other reformers to propound the important doctrine of justification by faith alone, is not an African problem. For as M. J. McVeight, with deep insight, points out: "Although the African has many problems, uncertainty regarding the afterlife is not one of them. He believes in the survival of the personality after death."

Death as Fulfillment

The reason why individual survival after death is *a priori* and therefore not a matter of uncertainty, doubt and debate among Africans, is that death is never regarded as the ultimate enemy that threatens to annihilate the individual personality. Rather, death is accepted as both natural and inevitable; it is an ecstatic experience of fulfillment that reunites an individual with the ancestral spirits who have gone home to eternal life. Individual survival and immortality are automatic for all Africans because punishment for wrongdoing in this life occurs on *this* side of the grave.

One may, for instance, suffer punishment by way of illness, misfortune and even death by being struck down by

lightning or a falling tree to atone for the sins of disrupting an otherwise normal flow of life. Indeed, witches and sorcerers may often be expected to die that way or suffer misfortunes because witchcraft is an evil in the highest degree punishable before God. Put differently, Africans experience no anxiety about the life hereafter because the idea of judgement after death plays hardly any part in African traditional religion. Rather, punishment for wrongdoing was something meted out to the sinner on this side of the grave so that at death the sinner has already made things right with his or her fellow human beings, ancestors and God. In the light of this, individuals do not have to face death with fear and trembling, agonizing as to whether they would be saved or condemned to hell.

Life is Interrelational

For people of African ancestry, the focus in life is on the network of human interrelationships, African theologians should insist that the teaching of the Church should pay greater attention to this. The focus should be on continuing sinfulness between ourselves and our neighbours. This would force Christians to begin to deal seriously with the wrongs they do to others in society instead of focusing their gaze on the clouds in the sky, brooding about their future security in heaven.

As Christians focus on those sinful activities, hurtful to their neighbours, it will become possible for them to

think of ways of overcoming their sinful relationships. For the sphere of human interrelationships is left entirely in human hands to create death-dealing or life-giving social structures. Human beings cannot and should not plead that they are incapable of relating to others in just and humane ways because it is within their power and ability to transform the destructive social structures that threaten to destroy and undermine their corporate life together.

Right Believing and Right Doing

By focusing on the centrality of relationships, African theologians enable the Church to make necessary links between right believing and right doing, between faith and ethics - none of which can stand without the other. In the past, the Church was concerned that people should have right belief, correct dogma. Against this view, African theologians insist that right

belief (orthodoxy) and right doing (orthopraxis) belong together; both are equally important tests of the authenticity and the integrity of the gospel. The emphasis on both aspects can be made only when Christians take seriously what they do to and with one another in society as the measure of their faith in the saving God. As theology makes this crucial link between vertical and horizontal relationships, the Church will call Christians to account for what they do as people who try to live according to God's holy and living will. In consequence, when people claim that they believe in God, it is necessary for them to demonstrate the authenticity of their faith through the way they live in society.

Ref. *Voices from the Third World*.
Ecumenical Association Of Third
World Theologians. Vol. XV, No.1.
281 Deans Road, Colombo 10,
Sri Lanka.

IN THE RELIGIOUS SPHERE OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS:

- There is widespread belief in a supreme God, unique and transcendent.
- Africans have a sense of the sacred and a sense of mystery; there is high reverence for sacred places, persons and objects; sacred times are celebrated.
- Belief in the afterlife is incorporated in myths and in funeral ceremonies.
- The invisible world of spirits and ancestors is always present.
- Religion enfolds the whole of life, there is no dichotomy between life and religion.
- Ancestors mediate between God and man.
- Belief in the efficacy of intercessory prayer is widespread.
- It is believed that sin harms the public good, hence there are periodical purification rites in order to promote public welfare.

Ref. *Instrumentum Laboris* #105.
Synod of Bishops: Special Assembly for Africa

CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS IN A NEW EUROPE

Rabbi Norman Solomon

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In 1989 there was widespread euphoria at the collapse of Communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe. Democracy and prosperity were promised. Euphoria has now vanished; the promises have yet to be redeemed. Unemployment and social unrest have increased, and the people go hungry. At the same time, the affluent West has succumbed to one of its recurrent bouts of recession.

Superficially, the problems are economic. How does one move from a socialist to a free market economy? What sort of skills, training and infrastructure are needed? What help is required from outside? If these problems could be isolated, perhaps they could be solved.

However, economic problems cannot be isolated from social, political and moral ones. Economics cannot of itself tell us how to create a happy and prosperous society. The free market system needs a favourable environment in which to operate, and as Adam Smith himself noted in an enquiry into the *Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 1776, its operation must be subjected to moral and political constraints.

Democratic structures are necessary to enable the market to operate efficiently. What is democracy? The Athenians prided themselves on their democracy, yet denied equality to women and slaves. When slavery was abolished, women were still disenfranchised. Today, many states claim to be democratic yet deny full civil rights to those whose colour, ethnic origin or religion differs from that of the ruling group; in South Africa, the minority has denied the rights of the majority.

A democratic government must, at a minimum, guarantee equality before the law for all who fall under its jurisdiction, without regard to colour, gender, ethnic origin or religion. Yet precisely this minimum is threatened across Europe. It is threatened by the collective emotions of ethnic and religious identity.

Personal identity may be formed in terms of ethnic and religious connections. Things go wrong, however, when the law prescribes ethnic and religious identity, when people are made outcasts if they do not conform to the identity preferred by those in power.

1. THE DESTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY

Each person from Bosnia, each asylum seeker refused entry to the West, each divided family facing cold and starva-

tion, is witness to the destruction of democracy in the mangled remains of Yugoslavia. If the Balkan leaders had

paid heed to the concept of democracy as guaranteeing the equality of all citizens before the law, irrespective of race, religion, gender and colour, they would not have plunged the region into war.

Denial of Citizenship

The Balkan wars aim at the exact opposite of democracy. Their objective is the denial of citizenship, that is, equal rights, to persons of the 'wrong' ethnic or religious group. The naked meaning of 'ethnic cleansing' (a term used in the early 1980s of Albanian villages cleared of Serbs) is 'Get out! Leave the home where you and your father before you were born! Because of your race or religion you are not fit for me to grant you equal rights on my territory!' Those with guns and ideologies do not pause to enquire by just what perverse logic Bosnian A can tell Bosnian B, whose ancestors may well have lived in the country longer than his own. 'This is my country, not yours.'

The Balkans' conflicts are religious as well as ethnic. Serbs are predominantly Orthodox Christians, Croats are Roman Catholic; many Bosnians are Muslim. Media shorthand speaks of Serbs, Croats and Muslims, mixing together ethnic and religious categories. Better to talk either in ethnic terms: Serbs, Croats, Bosnians - or in religious terms: Orthodox, Catholics, Muslims. The ethnic divisions are not exactly co-extensive with the religious divisions, any more than Ireland is divided into a 100% Catholic South and a 100% Protestant North. But, as in Ireland, the sense of ethnic identity feeds on religion.

Mutual Oppression

There is a long history of mutual oppression and conflict. Tito smothered the latent identities, but they have never been far from the surface. Well within living memory, during the Second World War, atrocities were committed by one group against the other, reinforcing the deep-seated stereotypes.

The gut reaction of Bosnian Muslims to the prospect of domination by Orthodox Serbs is no less than that of the Orthodox to the prospect of domination by Muslims. The fears of both are justified by past experience.

What an appalling tragedy this is! The economic cost is staggering; a country poised to lead the economic revival of ex-communist Europe has reduced itself to poverty and deprivation and wantonly destroyed the infrastructure needed for future growth. The social cost is even greater; hundreds of thousands of families have been ripped apart; friends turned into enemies; the flames of hatred fanned to a fury whose bitterness may persist for generations.

Eric Hobsbawm has argued that the present ethnic conflicts in Europe are the pent-up result of Woodrow Wilson's attempt, after the First World War and the break-up of the Czarist and Habsburg Empires, to divide the map of Europe into ethnic-linguistic territorial states - a policy which led to expulsion, coercion and genocide. In reality, the conflict between ethnicity and nation is much older. In the Bible we see it in Solomon's abortive attempt (I Kings 4) to replace the tribal organisation of Israel with a central, national administration. In modern Africa we see it as nations, arbitrarily carved out by Western imperialists in their rush to acquire territory, beset by internal tribal divisions.

The modern nation state simply is not ethnically homogeneous. If ethnic separation and self-determination prevail, Europe will disintegrate.

Ethnic Cleansing

The first stage of reforming Europe is to set a clear pattern for the nation state. The pattern we must decisively reject is that of Mazzini or the Hegelian idealists of the last century, the unitary nation - 'one land, one people' - which embodies the true *Volksgeist* that determines the character and ideals of its citizens, and even decides who, of the people who have for

centuries lived on its soil, should or should not be a citizen. This was the Nazi ideal, and they blended with it the concept of the 'pure' race which possessed the right to subjugate or destroy inferior races. It is this fantasy of a metaphysical *Volksgeist* which leads one ethnic group to proclaim itself as 'cleaner' than another, and to demand the 'ethnic cleansing' of a geographical area. We saw the results of this philosophy under Hitler, but we have been too slow to halt its progress in Yugoslavia.

The British and other European governments failed to take effective steps to prevent civil war. Indecisiveness, followed by an open declaration that they would take no military action, opened the doors to ethnic cleansing and the setting up of concentration camps.

Yugoslavia

The actual destruction of Yugoslavia commenced with the recognition, encouraged by Germany and the Catholic Church, of Croatia alone as an independent republic. Britain and France were indecisive in opposing this move. Other ethnic/religious groups perceived the preferential recognition of Catholic Croatia as a threat, and felt compelled to seize control of what they regarded as their own territories. In this way, Yugoslavia has been ripped into 'ethnically clean' fragments.

It is outrageous that first Europe, then the United Nations, not only failed to act in time to prevent this regression into tribalism, but allowed themselves under a cloak of humanitarian aid to consolidate the ethnic separation which had taken place.

The Bosnian Red Cross trumpets as a success that it has transferred six thousand women and children from Sarajevo to Split, and ensured that they can reach safety. It may be an operational success for the Red Cross. It is a dismal failure for the world community. What it means is that several thousand wives have been separated from their husbands and their children - in many instances never to see them

again. It means that all of them face an impoverished and uncertain future. It means that the Red Cross has perforce connived in the 'ethnic cleansing' of Bosnia.

The British government has been widely condemned for its narrow and ungenerous restrictions on granting asylum. Two million people are in need of asylum, and our government should take the strongest initiative to ensure that they are not betrayed, or even delayed in their hour of need.

The Politicians' Task

For its own future, Europe must address the broader political issues. A state, as agreed at the Montevideo Convention of 1933, is a defined territory with a permanent population, a government to which the population gives habitual obedience, and a capacity to enter into relations with other states. There must be a clear separation not only between State and Church, but between State and race (ethnic origin). Such a definition is difficult to reconcile with traditional Islamic or Jewish political philosophy, or with certain trends in Christian political thinking. Theologians in all three faiths must put world peace at the top of their agenda, and accept that their dreams of harmony of government and faith are incompatible with the reality of human diversity.

1. Constitutions being adopted in the new democracies must be truly democratic. They must not discriminate amongst citizens on the grounds of race, colour, gender, or religion, nor contain provisions that differentiate the status of minorities from that of other citizens. *Ad hoc legislation* may be needed to ensure that minority interests are respected.

2. Political parties must not be based on race or religion. For historical reasons, countries such as Germany and Italy have religious parties, but now is the time to question the rationale behind them and to make adjustments in accord with modern political understanding and needs. The Church's

role, like that of the prophet in ancient Israel, should be outside the political establishment - counselling, criticizing but not governing. Any closer association leads to absurdity, such as parliament having the final word on whether the established Church may ordain women priests.

3. European consciousness must be strengthened. At the CEE conference on 7 September, where the United Kingdom presided, John Major said:

What lies at the heart of the community is one very simple idea. It is the notion that by blinding together

the nations of Europe in a common economic framework it would be possible to build an inextricable network of shared interests that would render war between former enemies impossible. That idea has worked. The Community has been the answer to the destructive side of nationalism in Western Europe.

I wish I could share John Major's optimism. There could be an inspiring vision of the New Europe. Unfortunately, the Treaty on European Union, the Maastricht Treaty, undermines rather than strengthens European consciousness.

2. ANTISEMITISM - THE MODEL

Antisemitism is the classical instance, in Western culture, of the process of separation and hatred between groups. It combines both ethnic and religious dimensions. The seven stages through which it grows mark the progression you can see today in the hatred of Serb for Muslim, of German for Gypsy, of Bulgarian for Turk. If none of those has reached the devilish fury of the Holocaust - the Final Solution - they tread the same path.

- 1 - DIFFERENCE
- 2 - PROJECTION
- 3 - STEREOTYPE
- 4 - DIVERSION
- 5 - LEGAL DISCRIMINATION
- 6 - VIOLENT PERSECUTION
- 7 - GENOCIDE

Difference

The first stage is that of dividing people into 'us' and 'them.' Of course, there must be divisions amongst people; otherwise how could I belong to my family and you to yours? Even wolves hunt in exclusive packs, and soldier bees defend their colony from 'invasion' by outsiders. The crunch comes when 'us and them' becomes 'us against them' - 'us' normal, 'them' abnormal.

The 'us against them' of Christians and Jews starts in the Gospels. By the

time of John, the fourth Gospel, it had been forgotten that Jesus was a Jew preaching to Jews about Judaism. Instead, the story has become one of Jesus versus the Jews - 'us,' Jesus and disciples, against 'them'; the renegade Jews. That sense of difference is reinforced today when the Gospels are read, unless the greatest care is taken in presentation. Jacques Maritain, one of the most sincere and intelligent Catholic theologians to be nice to Jews after the Holocaust, puts Jews in a favoured category; but the favoured category still makes them different, abnormal - them rather than us. Putting Jews in a favoured category is inverted antisemitism. They should simply be treated as normal human beings.

Projection

Next down the slope is projection. We create images of 'the other' by projecting our 'dark side' on them. Some old English bibles have headers summarising each page. When Isaiah condemns Israel, the headers proclaim 'Doom on Israel.' When he promises to redeem Israel, the header reads 'Promises to the Church' - not to Israel. No matter that the Church did not exist, or that Isaiah was explicit in his references to the people and land of Israel. When the Church came into

existence it quickly proclaimed itself *Verus Israel* (the true Israel) and appropriated to itself all the promises. But instead of accepting the criticisms, it developed the 'teaching of contempt' (*l'enseignement du mépris*, the phrase used by Jules Isaac in his 1948 '*Jesus et Israel*'), projecting its own evils on the Jewish people. The *adversus Judaeos* tradition of interpreting the Old Testament against the Jews has only recently been questioned by the Church.

Stereotype

A short slide takes us from projection to stereotype. Judas, who betrayed Jesus, was the first Christian stereotype of Jews. 'Christ-killers' was another. These stereotypes are not dead. Recently a case was referred to me in Birmingham of a child being bullied by classmates who told him he had killed Jesus. Jews have been portrayed as legalistic, as avaricious, as lecherous, as disciples of the devil, not merely in the popular imagination but in the writings of Church fathers such as John Chrysostom and in sacred art. Stereotypes are fantasies, out of touch with reality, so they are easily transferred from one group to another. During the Reformation stereotypes previously applied to Jews were applied to Catholics. Recently, antisemitic images from the Nazi *Der Stürmer* have been used to discredit Muslims as well as Jews.

Worse than the stereotypes were the false accusations. In Norwich in 1144 somebody accused a Jew of killing a Christian child to use his blood to bake the Passover *matza*. Neither the absence of evidence nor the abhorrent nature in Jewish eyes of such an act prevented the acceptance and repetition of the allegation and the consequent slaughter of countless innocent Jews throughout the Middle Ages. Later, when the Papacy insisted on a literal understanding of transubstantiation, host desecration stories spread, eventually focusing on Jews. The blood libel has been repeated in modern times, and a recent survey showed that it is still commonly believed among the

peasantry of Central and Eastern Europe.

In the 1890's, Maurice Joby's satire on Napoleon III was plagiarised by a Russian secret agent in Paris. Under the title of *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* it alleged an international Jewish conspiracy aimed at world power. The Nazis eagerly adopted it, and right wing, black consciousness and fundamentalist Muslim groups commonly use it today. A Saudi diplomat even cited it at a United Nations meeting.

Images are perpetrated in language and culture. Hence antisemitism gets into the post-Christian world, finding some other peg on which to hang, for instance race.

Diversion

During the Great Plague, Jews were often accused of having poisoned the wells. The Jews suffered, but the wells were not healed, and still the people died. The rats, beyond suspicion, continued to spread the plague. Until recently the Soviets and the Third World routinely shifted blame for the world's will to 'Israel and the CIA' and voices are heard now blaming Jews for communism. Such accusations divert people from identifying and putting right the causes of their own ills.

Legal Discrimination

Different laws and standards are applied to marginalised groups. The self-protective laws of Jewish/Church community became the discriminatory legislation of the Christian Empire. The Fourth Lateran Council, convened by Innocent III in 1215, ordained that Jews wear distinctive clothing, be barred from public office, and segregated from Christians; its provisions were the conscious model for the infamous Nuremberg Laws introduced by the Nazis in 1935.

Violent Persecution

Forcible conversions were never approved by the Church, but occasionally took place. Notwithstanding

the efforts of Rhineland bishops in the first Crusade and Bernard of Clairvaux in the second, Crusaders murdered thousands of Jews. The massacre at York in 1190, and the expulsion of the Jews from England under Edward I in 1290, were prototypes of acts of persecution to be repeated times without number. Western Christendom between 950-1250 became a persecuting society, a process explained by the historian R.I. Moore as the 'downside of the

extension of the power of the literate.' Today's massacres and expulsions of minorities in Europe likewise arise through power being seized by ideologists.

Genocide

The most extreme form was the Holocaust. It implies the total negation of the other, through humiliation and de-humanisation to actual extermination.

3. EUROPEAN CURRENTS

The Board of Deputies of British Jews has reported a 5% increase in antisemitic incidents in Britain since 1990. This dry statistic is not impressive - 5% is less than the general increase in reported criminal activity over that period. Instead of statistics, the Board should draw attention to the events which it misguidedly tries to conceal. The cemetery in which my parents are buried, in my native city of Cardiff, was broken into and fifty tombstones desecrated. There have been attacks on individuals, particularly on children attending Jewish schools. Then there is the hate propaganda which routinely appears in the national front, black consciousness and extremist Islamic press. Our laws should curb incitement to racial hatred but are inadequate.

In Britain other forms of racism are more acute than antisemitism. But antisemitism is chronic, with deeper roots in our culture. Nor are Jews complacent in the face of general racism. As Martin Luther King observed, 'We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.'

Many Germans maintain that antisemitism is decreasing despite the 10% vote for the right wing Republican Party in recent regional elections outside Berlin. However, an October survey indicated that one German in three believed there were good sides to Nazi rule and that Jews were partly to blame

for having been persecuted throughout history.

Poland

Early this year a Hamburg TV station reported an appeal by the late Heinz Galinski, then leader of the German Jewish community, for funds to help the Poles restore the crumbling fabric of Auschwitz. Donations of £100,000 poured in. So did hate mail. One German wrote that he would support the repair of Auschwitz if Galinski would be its first victim; another wrote that recommissioning Auschwitz would 'solve the immigrant problem.'

Both Polish society and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, present highly contradictory pictures. Cardinal Jozef Glemp and President Lech Walesa have been accused of antisemitic statements and of playing on the antisemitic prejudices inherent in Polish society. Semi-ignorant clergy continue to teach Catholicism with attitudes to Jews and Judaism which differ little if at all from the traditional 'teaching of contempt.'

On the other hand, promising work is being done by Catholic intellectuals in Cracow, and the Catholic Academy of Theology in Warsaw, in partnership with Spertus College of Chicago, is educating its young ordinands in the Church's new teachings on Jews and Judaism. Also, the Polish Bishops have produced excellent guidelines on Christian Jewish

relations. But the Bishops and the new clergy still have an uphill task eradicating endemic Polish antisemitism. Progress in Poland and in Eastern Europe depends on the extent to which democratic institutions will take root.

Germany

Not much later our TV screens brought us the horrific scenes of young Germans setting fire to the hostel for asylum seekers at Rostock, egged on by spectators from the local population. Not only the police, but German politicians were slow to respond. There have been outspoken condemnations, but also much excuse-making. Granted, the people of Rostock and elsewhere in ex-communist Germany suffer unemployment and economic hardship. But let them voice their opposition to the government which hastened unification, not against innocent foreigners and asylum seekers. Germany has been generous towards immigrants, but unfortunately the imposition of restrictions at this time looks like capitulation to racist demands. The forcible repatriation of 30,000 Sinti and Roma to Rumania is an open capitulation to neo-Nazi threats; it will dismay the victims and encourage the aggressors.

On Sunday, 8 November, 350,000 people assembled in Berlin to demonstrate against racism, the oppression of asylum seekers, and the desecration of Holocaust memorials. The event was supported by mainstream political parties. The Bavarian Christian Socialist Union, however, chose not to take part, and were praised for their reticence by Franz Schönhuber, whose own party is under investigation for alleged links with neo-Nazi groups. Anarchists threw eggs and even stones at president Richard von Weizsäcker who, in contrast with Chancellor Kohl, was ready to stand up and be counted. The demonstration coincided with Remembrance Day in Britain, and sig-

nificantly took place on the eve of *Kristallnacht*.

Further atrocities have been committed in the last few days. A neo-Nazi party has been banned and a few arrests made. This is no time for appeasement; neo-Nazism must be utterly and immediately crushed. Until the Bundestag enacts better legislation present laws must be fully implemented. As attention is focused on self-confessed Nazis, other extreme right-wingers must not be allowed to gain respectability.

Hungary

Julia Smith, writing in *The Times* on 4 May about the proposed new Hungarian Education Act, observed that racial prejudice is reasserting itself now that communist oppression has gone. Minorities are outraged at the publication of nationalistic texts such as *The Review of History* by Antal Uranski, first published in 1941 under Nazi influence. 'Democracy, for many of Hungary's ethnic minorities, means being bullied at school.' There are instances of Jewish families emigrating to escape antisemitic bullying of their children. Most sinister is the readiness of some nationalist academics to contemplate the reintroduction of a *numerus clausus* for Jews entering the professions; Admiral Horthy's introduction of the *numerus clausus* in the 1920's was the first anti-Jewish law in Europe after the First World War.

In the 1990 electoral campaign, the first since the demise of communism, the Free Democratic Alliance was dubbed 'the Jewish party,' and allegations of antisemitism were used to discredit the victorious Hungarian Democratic Forum. However, both parties strenuously deny antisemitism, and there have been successful prosecutions under Hungary's laws of incitement against racist and antisemitic publication.

4. RECONCILIATION WITH THE CHURCHES

Since the Second World War, imperialism and racism have been acknowledged as evils. This attitude is new. When I went to school in the 1940's much of the world map was coloured red, proudly proclaiming the extent of the Empire. I still remember Winston Churchill opposing the independence of India: 'I have not become His Majesty's first minister in order to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire.' Full realisation of the excesses of Nazism led to widespread public repudiation of antisemitism, and of racism in general. Guilt feelings have led Churches to seek reconciliation with Jews.

World Council of Churches

The first Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Amsterdam 1948, resolutely condemned antisemitism:

We call upon all the churches we represent to denounce anti-Semitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. *Anti-Semitism is sin against God and man.* (My emphasis)

But there was a sting in the tail. Christians were told to love the Jews by preaching the Gospel to them with redoubled vigour. Jews reflected, 'Hitler tried to destroy our bodies; these people try to destroy our souls.' Many years were to pass before the WCC modified its conversionist attitude; Jews, unsurprisingly, still suspect its motives.

Vatican II and Beyond

At Second Vatican Council, twenty years after the Holocaust, the Roman Catholic Church addressed the problem. Note 4 to the Conciliar document *Nostra Aetate* (1965) contains these words:

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved

not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

The first high level Roman Catholic statement to denounce antisemitism as a sin was made by Cardinal Cassidy at Prague in 1990, in my hearing, and has since been endorsed by the Pope. The present Pope has indeed gone out of his way to seek reconciliation with Jews. The will is there, but it is difficult for Catholics to overcome the habits of two thousand years and difficult for Jews to trust them. A slip of the tongue in an Easter sermon, a suggestion that Jews may have been involved in the crucifixion of Jesus, a failure to respond promptly to perceived antisemitism - any of these rapidly reopens old sores.

In this light we can understand the furore about the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz. Even if the convent was not a deliberate provocation, it was naive for the Church not to see that Jews would read it as an attempt to take over a sacred Jewish memorial. 'You have taken our Bible, now you are taking our sacred memories from us.' Why were Church leaders not sensitive enough to foresee that this would be the reaction even though they were warned about it as soon as Jews became aware what was happening?

No one can doubt that the Catholic Church today has a far more constructive and benevolent attitude to Jews and Judaism than ever before. But it may take generations for the new teachings to percolate down from the Vatican to the pew. How will the new teaching reach the newly free Churches of ex-communist Europe, or the vast, impoverished and uneducated Catholic masses in the third world?

The New Theology

The Vatican is publishing a new universal catechism. Doubtless, it will

accurately reflect the Church's attitudes to Jews and Judaism, as already formulated in three major Vatican documents, and in the Pope's statement that the promises to Israel were never revoked. When I receive a copy I shall look for consistency. Will the right inferences have been drawn from the new found recognition of the 'ongoing spiritual vitality of Judaism' (1985 document)? For instance, if God did not revoke his covenant with Israel, the Church cannot claim to be 'the true Israel,' but rather, as Paul put it, to have been 'grafted on to the tree' of Israel. This undermines the traditional 'supersessionist' claim that Christianity has displaced Judaism as the exclusive fulfilment of divine promise.

Catholics are taught not to accuse Jews collectively of killing Christ, nor to regard them as a 'rejected and accursed race.' Will the catechism show them how to read passages such as John 8 without drawing these conclusions? Will it show how to read the Hebrew Scriptures so that they are not just a foreshadowing of Christianity? Rosemary Ruether has argued that antisemitism is the 'left hand of Christology.' Does the catechism succeed in formulating Christology so that it no longer implies rejection of Jews and Judaism? These and related issues have been addressed by Catholic theologians - Baum, Charlotte Klein, Mussner, Pawlikowski, Fleischner, Thoma, Küng - and the Sisters of Sion, who are working out the implications for the life of the Church of the new thinking on Jews and Judaism.

Dialogue with Jews is proceeding at many levels. Reaction to the Holocaust is one driving force towards the search for reconciliation, though good relationships are not built on guilt. Another factor is the impact of historical critical research on our understanding of scripture and of the historical Jesus. Yet perhaps most important of all is the realisation that without understanding between religions there can be no peace in the world. Without an understanding with Judaism, there can be no peace

within Christianity itself.

True Reconciliation

The serious study of Judaism as a living faith, and its relationship with Christianity, are an essential, non-marginal part of Christian formation today.

Christians must therefore strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism; they must strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience. (Vatican 'Guidelines and Suggestions', 1974)

The Jews and Judaism should not occupy an occasional and marginal place in catechesis: their presence there is essential and should be organically integrated. (Vatican 'Notes,' 1985)

This dream can be realised. Its first achievement will be to assist the process of reconciliation between Jew and Christian. This reconciliation is the only real sustained resistance to antisemitism. Through the resistance to antisemitism we will proceed to the resistance to all forms of racism and discrimination. Such resistance would effect a transformation of the culture of Europe, which at present is deeply imbued with destructive nationalist and sectarian imagery and attitudes. Christian-Jewish relations therefore lie at the very heart of the transformation of Europe. Get it right, and we can entertain a rosy vision of the new Europe, one in which ethnic and religious diversity are the foundation for a cohesive social life within which an economy can flourish. Get it wrong, and that very same ethnic and religious diversity will destroy society and frustrate economic progress, as we have seen in Yugoslavia.

Ref. *The Month*, January, 1993

114 Mount Street, London, W1Y 6AH

LIBERIA: THE FORGOTTEN WAR

Dain Inglis, FDNSC

INTRODUCTION

"Everyone in this country is moving somewhere, fleeing the terrors, real and expected," wrote a missionary sister last Christmas Eve, three years after war broke out in Liberia. "It tears me apart to see so much suffering and be able to do so little," wrote another missionary, commenting on the masses displaced by the fighting. Liberia, the first independent country of Africa, formed in the mid 19th century by freed American slaves, has been caught in an horrific civil war since late 1989. This article, using extensive quotations from missionaries on the spot, reports on the last violent phase of a war that has pulverized this country of 2.6 million people over the last five months, killing many, including 5 American sisters, and displacing most if not all the population.

A FORGOTTEN WAR

Every day the newspapers speak of war! Every night the T.V. news brings the reality of war into the homes of families all over the world. Small children as well as adults know about the suffering people of Bosnia, Somalia, Mozambique, but how many people are aware of what is happening in Liberia? Why is it that scores of journalists and cameramen flock to Baghdad, Sarajevo, Mogadiscio in search of news but very few ever make their way to Monrovia, the capital of Liberia?

The Liberian war is not some small local skirmish of little interest to the rest of the world. It is a full scale violent war that has killed thousands of

Liberians and has forced some 700,000 to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. It has been in progress, with varying degrees of intensity, since December 24, 1989. The entire infrastructure of the country has been destroyed and very little remains today of pre-war Liberia. A member of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Rome, who recently returned from Bosnia, made the comment that the massive destruction he had seen in Monrovia was at least as devastating as that seen in Bosnia in the battle scarred areas that he visited.

"Liberia" means "Land of Liberty." This beautiful name no longer applies. Liberia, no longer a land of liberty, is being torn apart by the power struggle of rival warring factions. Fr. Mark Raper, S.J., aptly sums up an important factor at the root of this war: "Violence in Liberia assumes a tribal face but its seeds were planted through injustice and corruption. Tribalism is not so much a cause of the chaos as a symptom."

THE LANDSCAPE OF WAR

At the present moment, about 90% of the land area of the country is "under the control" of the rebel leader, Charles Taylor, who heads the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). The remaining 10%, which includes the capital, Monrovia, is under the control of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) led by Amos Sawyer. (In neither case should one assume that 'control' implies an administration of the country in any classical sense. In fact all social and political institutions are in disarray). Another smaller faction, the United Liberation Movement of Liberia

for Democracy (ULIMO), is actively engaged in trying to seize territory from the NPFL. A West African peace keeping force, ECOMOG, composed of soldiers from several African nations, has intervened to curb the violence with varying degrees of success.

In November 1990, a ceasefire was declared and a somewhat fragile peace resulted. Several peace conferences set up under the auspices of the West African Economic Community brought about shaky agreements among the warring parties. Plans were set for elections and disarmament as a prerequisite for these elections. The election date was several times postponed. During a period of quiet in early 1992, a growing sense of hope drifted into Liberia. Refugees began to return. It is estimated that about 80,000 returned prior to the renewed fighting in July and August, 1992, when ULIMO seized control of areas between the Sierra Leone border and Monrovia, previously held by the NPFL.

Any vestige of hope that still remained after this outbreak of violence was completely shattered on October 15, 1992, when the NPFL made a fierce attack on Monrovia under cover of darkness. All the talk of disarmament, it now appears, was only a pretext to gain time for further rearmament. The NPFL surprise attack on the capitol was the beginning of a concerted, but so far unsuccessful, offensive to gain control of the capital and consequently of the whole country.

DISPLACED PEOPLES

Thousands of people fled from the fighting. "The worst thing of all," wrote one missionary, "is to see the people as refugees once again. They wander pathetically along the road with a few belongings seeking safety. Hours later you see them returning, seeking another refuge, because no safety was to be had."

More than 3000 people died during the battle for the capital. These include five American missionary sisters belong-

ing to the religious congregation of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. These sisters were wantonly and violently killed at point blank range. The horror of their deaths drew the attention of the world. Yet within a few days, media interest moved elsewhere and the war in Liberia was once again forgotten.

ECOMOG eventually repulsed the NPFL attack and carried out bombing raids against NPFL territory. Missionaries endured this bombardment together with the people. Their words speak for themselves. "The air attack was terrifying, it would be abnormal not to feel fear in every fibre of my being." "There is a lot of fear and many people have already left the town. Planes have come twice this weekend and truly it is frightening." "I am daily surprised at my capacity to adjust to the terror, the unexpected, and the sufferings of the people."

The United Nations, which had previously exercised only a humanitarian role in Liberia, considered the conflict in the Security Council. Among measures taken was an embargo in order to prevent the arming of the Taylor faction. Yet the embargo has also caused severe shortages of basic food supplies.

"Today ECOMOG has regained control of Monrovia but the war continues. ULIMO is now on the offensive against the NPFL in the rural areas of the country. Kakata, the most important town between Monrovia and Gbarnga, Taylor's stronghold, has been taken by ULIMO. The people are in an extremely dangerous situation because they are being caught between two battle fronts and the fighting is fierce. News received from this part of the country informs us that nothing is working anywhere now - air raids put an end to the little water and electricity there was. Government (the administration) structures, in so far as they exist, are geared only to war. The UN embargo has caused severe shortages of essentials. Fortunately it is rice harvest time, and the people have managed to harvest some local foods. In February and March there will be severe starva-

tion if the humanitarian agencies are unable to get food into these areas. Health services have run out of drugs and fuel."

The course of the war changes from day to day and it is difficult to keep abreast of developments. However, the suffering of the people does not change, except in so far as it becomes worse. Those who managed to reach Monrovia before the roads were closed were crowded by the thousands into various shelters in the centre of the city. Here the increase of disease is high, especially from malnutrition, diarrhoea and measles. UN agencies and NGOs are trying to assist displaced Liberians.

In addition there are also several thousand Sierra Leonean refugees in the city who are awaiting repatriation by the UNHCR to Sierra Leone, most of these are women and children. A further 95,000 Sierra Leoneans are stranded in the isolated north of the country. Their situation is desperate because since mid-August, 1992, fighting has prevented UNHCR and NGO staff from reaching most of them. At that time malnutrition was already reaching an alarming rate among adults as well as children, 49% in some areas. Water and sanitation were deplorable; over 50% of the children suffered from diarrhoea. Inadequate health services and lack of shelter, blankets and clothing added to their plight.

To further complicate the situation, a measles epidemic broke out in the country and was being carried by the refugee population. No one can say just how many children have died. Until recently, the shelling of Monrovia's port prevented the docking of ships carrying food and medical supplies. Despite the danger, a chartered Hercules managed to fly six tons of drugs into Monrovia, including urgently needed vaccines to inoculate 10,000 children in the city threatened with the measles epidemic. Hospitals in the city (only the hospital run by the St. John of God Brothers had been able to get back to anything near its capacity) overburdened because of the war, were fur-

ther taxed by the number of children suffering from measles. The UN began its own crash programme to airlift drugs to combat the epidemic.

REFUGEE CAMPS

In the neighbouring countries there are still large numbers of Liberian refugees, some of whom have fled the war for the second time. Numbers are not always accurate, but according to recent figures there are 404,000 refugees in Guinea, most of whom are Liberians (some fled from Sierra Leone after the coup in that country); 195,000 in Côte d'Ivoire; 10,000 in Ghana; 7,000 in Sierra Leone and 1,300 in Nigeria. Although safe from the war, many live in very difficult circumstances. In the Liberian refugee camp in Ghana, for example, there are grave health problems because of the inadequacy of the clinic serving the refugees. It has been reported that expired drugs are being used and medicines, especially syrups, are being diluted with water making them virtually ineffective.

THE FUTURE

When and how will this war ever end? Certainly not in the near future according to one missionary. "The situation is terrible," he says, "and it is hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel." There can be little hope of light at the end of the tunnel if European nations continue to indirectly finance the war by importing Liberian timber. Liberia has great forests worth millions of dollars and overlogging in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire has increased the value of Liberian forests. These forests are in the area controlled by the NPFL and Charles Taylor is selling timber to European nations and buying arms with the funds he receives. Timber, iron ore and diamonds are shipped through ports under NPFL control. According to figures from the Africa: Economic and Intelligence Unit in London, Liberia exported 200,000 cubic metres of timber to Portugal, France, Germany, Italy and Turkey, between November 1991 and October 1992.

On November 19, 1992 the UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo on Liberia in an effort to cut off the supply of weapons to the rebel forces. However, the UN did not extend the embargo to the export of Liberian products. Although ECOMOG sank several ships trying to transport arms into the country, cash still flows and so do arms. Arms had previously been transported overland from Libya through Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire.

CHILDREN OF WAR

Arms are put into the hands of children, some as young as 10 or 12 years of age. This is one of the saddest aspects of the Liberian war. These children are not just orphaned or abandoned, following the wake of rebel forces. On the contrary, they are actively involved in the war and carry automatic weapons which they use indiscriminately. Many of them take drugs before beginning their daily round of violence, after which they cannot easily be controlled.

The military recruitment of children under the age of 15 violates international humanitarian law. In April 1990, Liberia signed the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which specifically prohibits recruiting children under 15. Despite this, it is estimated that there are more than 1,000 child combatants in Liberia. In Charles Taylor's 'army,' there even exists what is known as the SBU, the Small Boys Unit! Amnesty International reports that, on about October 28, 1992, 300 orphans were apparently taken from an orphanage on the outskirts of Monrovia by NPFL forces. Orphans who escaped have said that the NPFL was forcing these boys to fight for them.

Children are engaged in violence but they have also been victims of violence. They have witnessed unspeakable

atrocities against their tribes and families and they have been traumatized by these experiences. Child combatants will need immense compassion, understanding and help if they are ever to be re-integrated into society when the war is over. Already various church and humanitarian agencies are looking at ways and means of helping such children.

AN ELUSIVE PEACE

Peace for Liberia seems to be a long way off, at least from the military point of view. Even so, peace can begin in the hearts of the people. While those perpetrating the violence appear to have no desire for peace, there is certainly an immense longing for peace in the hearts of the majority of Liberians. In a pastoral letter to his people, Archbishop Michael Kpakala Francis, the Catholic Archbishop of Monrovia, indicates the first steps that his people must take if they are to follow the road that will lead to peace.

Our first priority is reconciliation. We all need to forgive and be forgiven. Let us consciously and deliberately reach across tribal lines and extend friendship and hospitality to those we are expected to hate. Let us cherish the memory of all the innocent victims, whether from our side or the other side. We must never forget them, nor the ordeals to which they were subjected. But let us focus on the obliteration of the hatred that brought about their untimely deaths.

These words were directed to Liberians but they are just as applicable to all people engaged in violent conflict, whether it be in Bosnia, Somalia, India or elsewhere.

Ref. *Jesuit Refugee Service*
Rome, February, 1993

TOWARD 1997: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HONG KONG

John Tong

(Father Tong, Vicar General of the Diocese of Hong Kong, gave this address at the China-Symposium held by the Society of the Divine Word from October 29-31, 1992.)

Hong Kong's evolution from fishing village to commercial centre, its transfer of sovereignty from China to Great Britain was accomplished in three stages. Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain in 1842 by the Treaty of Nanjing. In 1860 the Kowloon Peninsula was added by the Treaty of Beijing. Finally, in 1898, Britain obtained a 99 year lease of the New Territories; thus completing what we know today as the Crown Colony of Hong Kong.

The problem of 1997 arose when China, in talks about renewing the lease, reclaimed sovereignty over the whole territory. After a period of prolonged negotiation, the Joint Declaration was signed by both governments on September 26, 1984. It stipulated that Hong Kong and all its territories would revert to China and become a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic. It also stated that its capitalist social system would be kept unchanged for the first 50 years.

The Basic Law governing Hong Kong was promulgated by the National People's Congress in April of 1990, after five years of discussion and consultation. It gives Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy. It also guarantees the continuance of the present administrative system and the life style of its people.

The Basic Law states clearly that after 1997, the government will not restrict religious freedom, interfere in the internal affairs of its religious organizations, nor impede religious

activities that do not contravene the laws of the People's Republic. However, the right to modify the Basic Law is retained by the National People's Congress and the authority to interpret the law is retained by its standing committee. Many people in Hong Kong have shown a lack of faith in its future by taking steps to emigrate.

The Future of Hong Kong

In the atmosphere of apprehension caused by the signing of the joint declaration, Cardinal Wu issued a formal statement about the territory's future. He called upon us to take pride in our three-fold identity: as Chinese, as Hong Kong citizens and as Catholics. As Chinese, we must value all that is rich and positive in our cultural tradition, but we should also broaden our feelings of patriotism to embrace the larger world. As citizens of Hong Kong, we must continue to work together with our fellow citizens to maintain our stability and prosperity, but more importantly, we should also work to insure a balanced development of the spiritual as well as the material aspects of our society. Finally, as Catholics we are to stand firm for freedom of religion as a fundamental God-given human right. The Cardinal urged us to preserve our communion with the universal Church under the leadership of the Pope, while continuing to develop our special charism as a local church.

On his two visits to mainland China, once in 1985 and again in 1986, the Cardinal said on more than one occasion

that the time had come for the diocese of Hong Kong to contribute to China's modernization with the same spirit and dedication that it has contributed to the welfare of Hong Kong. He also said that the church in Hong Kong has a bridge role to play in facilitating a more positive and unifying relationship between the local church in China and

the universal Church. Later in his pastoral letter *March into the Bright Future* (1989), he urged Catholics in Hong Kong to take as a high priority the Christian task of reconciliation, with special concern for our mainland brothers and sisters, and to develop small faith communities in which this can be more effectively accomplished.

1. ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS

With regard to the "one country, two systems" promised in the Joint Declaration and Basic Law, we have to make a distinction between pre-1997 and post-1997. Can these documents guarantee that Hong Kong will not experience any abrupt changes during the transformation period? I don't think so. It seems much more likely that fluctuations in China's internal affairs over the next 50 years will be the deciding factor for changes in Hong Kong. Chinese leadership tends toward two different mind-sets - pragmatist and ideologist and "one country, two systems" is open to interpretation by both groups.

Pragmatists

Pragmatists tend to pay lip service to Communist ideology. For example, they tend to ignore such directives of the past as the Four Cardinal Principles (socialism, dictatorship of the proletariat, party leadership and Marxist, Leninist, Maoist thought) all but disregarding them in favour of more pragmatic policies. They retain the vocabulary as a matter of form, but ignore it when it comes to practical planning. Many in Hong Kong are hoping that this group of leaders will be able to break through the restrictive ideology of the past and carry China forward into a brighter future. They would also be more receptive to the idea of China allowing the capitalistic system of Hong Kong to continue if only to insure a prosperous Hong Kong.

Ideologists

On the other hand, many Chinese leaders are still Marxists and remain

loyal to the socialist road. While they are not above making slight concessions in the face of current realities, they still remain Marxists at heart. Professor Liu Shusheng of the Chinese University of Hong Kong comments: "All they can talk about is the superiority of socialism, and I have no reason to doubt their sincerity and faith." For many of them - "one country, two systems" means socialist China only needs to borrow certain economic methods from the capitalistic system. When Qian Junrui, an economist and adviser to the Academy of Social Sciences, addressed an important meeting in Hangzhou in July of 1984, he outlined the direction the Party and Central Government must take in the next half-century. He offered this interpretation: "The government has been using capitalism to upgrade socialism by opening up ports and developing special economic zones to encourage trade and investments. At the same time we are promoting a "spiritual" civilization (i.e. socialist ideology) throughout the country. In sixty years we shall have created a China that will enjoy both material and spiritual prosperity." Qian then adds: "This is the direction we have taken with Hong Kong and is in line with our plans to develop the whole country."

An Unexpected Outcome

This promotion of capitalistic methods which does not engender in the individual the values of a capitalist society, might strike the observer as wishful thinking. How can one separate the economic world from the spiritual world,

which Qian sees as guided by socialistic ideals? No one can deny that China, in its relationship to the outside capitalistic world, still struggles and will continue to struggle to obtain the best of both possible worlds. However, the result may be just the opposite of what they intended and suddenly they may find that they themselves are being transformed by capitalism.

When Margaret Thatcher visited Hong Kong in 1992, she offered a third point of view. She predicted that the current capitalistic economy of Hong Kong would

continue to assert a great influence on the economy of Southern China, and this must eventually lead to a political revolution in the mainland government. Given the present situation of the economies of other places in Southeast Asia, including Taiwan, I myself tend to see this as highly probable. I am not praising capitalism as such. Nowadays, there can be no successful capitalistic society that does not integrate some elements of socialism. A sound legal system and the cultivation of personal integrity are required for the welfare of any society.

2. THE CHINESE POLITICAL CHARACTER

As 1997 approaches, Hong Kong will be more and more subject to China's influence. As Chinese Catholics we must be guided by a spirit of solidarity and a readiness to dialogue. As our contacts and opportunities for working together with Communist authorities increase in frequency, we must make the clear distinction between an unacceptable atheistic ideology and the acceptability of working with persons whose beliefs are different from our own. We cannot compromise on fundamental matters of faith - to do so would be to betray who and what we are. We do however stand ready to cooperate with others for the greater good of society, even if it means we must sacrifice some things which are not of the essence of church teaching and contrary to the Christian way of life.

In the future, in any dialogue with Communist authorities, we must be aware of the following: first, the bottom line of Beijing's policy towards Hong Kong, secondly, China's interpretation of reality, and thirdly, the difference that exists between public and private statements.

The Bottom Line

The bottom line denotes the outer limits of government policy. To go beyond it is to risk walking into forbidden and dangerous territory, i.e.

directly challenging central government authority. For our purposes here it refers to the parameters of the relationship of authority between the central government and the government of the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

According to Appendix 1 of the Joint Declaration, "The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is to be under the direct jurisdiction of the central government of the People's Republic of China, and it will enjoy a high degree of autonomy." But what is this "high degree of autonomy?" When the joint declaration was written, the former Foreign Minister, Wu Xueqian, drew the bottom line when he stated that a high degree of autonomy does not include the sphere of practical political realities. In other words, the bottom line means that Hong Kong will not be "independent of" nor allowed to "seek independence" from Beijing's centralized control.

China and Totalitarianism

China has a long history of totalitarianism. For centuries, she considered herself to be the centre of civilization. Barbarian nations who were willing to pay their allegiance to her and offer tribute would not only be spared antagonism, but on the contrary rewarded for their efforts. The Chinese

Communists are heirs to this authoritarian tradition. This means they are open to persuasion but not to coercion. Open confrontation is for them a matter of "face" as well as principle.

Leaders and some prominent Hong Kong intellectuals ran an advertisement in a local newspaper containing the following statement: We think that the people of Hong Kong and the Chinese government should try to understand one another and work to establish a basis of mutual trust. This aroused Beijing's anger as it seemed to put "the Chinese government" and "the people of Hong Kong" on an equal footing and did not recognize the subservient relationship of central authority over local authority, a failure to distinguish between the role of leadership and of those being led. China felt that the people of Hong Kong owed loyalty and faith to the Chinese government and "mutual trust and understanding" was not the point of issue at all.

Post - 1997 Hong Kong

In addressing the lack of confidence expressed in a post-1977 Hong Kong, the Chinese government always says that one cannot conclude that the people have little or no faith in Beijing's political leadership. Rather it is to be interpreted as a psychological phenomenon which occurs in the hearts of people at major "turning points in

history."

Professor Shen Xuanren of the Religion and Philosophy Department of Hong Kong's Chinese University points out that in China there are really great differences between "public statement" and "private utterance." This has also been referred to as "on-stage and backstage" language. The people receive the "public word" from the mass media or from official documents such as editorials in the *People's Daily*. They listen, study, digest, and memorize this on-stage language and give it back when speaking in public places. They will do this especially when talking to or in front of foreigners. Only when a climate of mutual trust has been established will they risk using the "private word" or "backstage language" to speak their minds and reveal what is really in their hearts.

Some resourceful and daring people make use of "public vocabulary" to attack abuses in the system which have been widely expressed in private. An example of this is a group of young people in Guangzhou City who a few years back, under the pen name of "Li Yi Zhe," used the vocabulary of Mao Zedong thought to expose the corrupt practices of officials. How does one distinguish different levels of speaking in China? Much depends on a knowledge and careful observation of China's language, culture and political history.

3. HONG KONG'S HISTORICAL ROLE

Over the past three decades Hong Kong's economy has taken off. This has largely been the result of the hard work and effort of the people of Hong Kong. However, other important factors have also contributed to its stability and prosperity. First and foremost among them has been its legal system (originally British). Rule by law has protected, by and large, basic human rights and freedom. All citizens enjoy freedom of religion, speech, free association and personal mobility, the right to an education, choice of employment and

residence. The industrial and commercial sectors also enjoy great freedom from government interference. This rule of law, and the freedom it guarantees, has created in Hong Kong a sophisticated, pluralistic, and highly developed society - one that is stable and prosperous.

The citizens of Hong Kong have become known for their self-reliance, practical wisdom and creativity. They are enterprising and not afraid to take risks, especially when it comes to the

economy. They have also produced outstanding entrepreneurs from each new generation.

Hong Kong has served as a place of refuge for those fleeing totalitarian governments or natural disasters. After 1949, a great number of Chinese refugees fled to Hong Kong from the mainland, and in recent years numerous refugees have come from Vietnam. Hong Kong gave them a place of rest, a taste of freedom, the spirit of creativity and humanitarianism; all these are the ingredients which give meaning and value to the existence of Hong Kong. They also comprise the most important contribution it can make to China.

Mr. Leo Goodstadt, who heads the government think-tank in Hong Kong, has said that he is full of hope and optimism regarding Hong Kong's future. He based his opinion not on its material situation, but on a time-tested capability to overcome difficulties. He cited the example of the Second World War when many citizens fled Hong Kong during the Japanese occupation only to return to rebuild a city of international

significance. He spoke of the 1950's when Hong Kong was deluged by refugees from mainland China, most of them penniless and with only the clothes on their backs. Hong Kong quickly absorbed them, providing them with homes, food and jobs, and in return these refugees helped to make Hong Kong prosper and flourish. In 1967 while the Cultural Revolution raged out of control in China, Hong Kong experienced serious civil disturbances, but the city quickly quieted down.

Hong Kong, without any natural resources, relies solely on human resources. Tourism is flourishing; commercial and business enterprises are well developed; and, Hong Kong is one of the world's leading financial centres. Its frenetic and fast-paced rhythm of life have made its people highly adaptable to change. Along with this factor, great strides are being made in the economy of neighbouring Guangdong Province, which is rapidly closing the gap that exists in the standard of living of both places. All this bodes well for Hong Kong and leaves little room for pessimism about its future.

4. THE FUTURE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HONG KONG

The Catholic Church came to Hong Kong in 1841. It is now the largest religious organization in the territory. It is also numerically the largest Chinese Catholic diocese in the world. According to statistics released in August of 1992, Catholics number 260,000, which does not include the nearly 80,000 Filipinas who work in Hong Kong as domestic helpers. There are 350 priests, evenly divided between Chinese and foreign. Sisters number 700, with Chinese Sisters in the majority; there are 70 religious Brothers. The diocese has 61 churches. It administers 6 hospitals, 9 clinics, 275 schools with nearly 300,000 students, 14 social service organizations, 11 hostels, 29 homes for the aged and centres for the handicapped. The church indeed contributes greatly to

the social welfare and development of Hong Kong and its people.

A Church Alive

Although many Catholics continue to emigrate to foreign countries, their number is annually replaced by 2,000 adult converts, who bring much vitality to the church. Local clergy are taking over leadership roles in the diocese. Both clergy and religious are given a variety of opportunities to go abroad for updating and renewal courses. The laity are gradually assuming more and more pastoral responsibilities in the parishes. About 500 lay Catholics are enrolled in evening Bible and theology courses run by professors at the major

seminary. Many deepen their faith by joining small groups that meet each week for Scripture reflection and prayer. All of these are positive developments in the Hong Kong church.

Article 148 of the Basic Law reads, "The relationship between the religious organizations in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and their counterparts on the mainland shall be based on the principles of non-subordination, non-interference, and mutual respect." However, as 1997 moves closer, we cannot but analyze the situation of the church on the mainland in some depth. In response to historical and political factors, the Communist government demanded that the church on the mainland maintain independence and sever its ties with the Vatican and the Pope. The Chinese church has to carry out a policy of "self-government, self-support and self-propagation." The main aim of this policy is, by eliminating the influence of western culture and expelling foreign missionaries, to separate Chinese Catholics from the centralized authority and patriarchal leadership of Rome.

Three Principles

The three principles are, I think, quite in keeping with Church teaching, especially with Post-Vatican II theology where localization or indigenization is seen as an ideal and a necessity. It seems to me that it is necessary to reverse the order of emphasis and to place self-propagation first. Self-support and self-government naturally follow. This is not only sound ecclesiology but also in accordance with the Gospel spirit.

Why should these principles begin with self-propagation? Because it follows the order of Vatican II's *Constitution on the Church* where we first speak about the People of God, and then talk about the church's hierarchical structure. At the time of baptism, each Christian is given a pastoral mission. Each shares in the priestly, kingly and prophetic role of Christ. We are to take up the task of preaching

the Gospel, which is a self-propagating ministry.

As Catholics mature, nourishing their lives through the Scriptures and prayer they will deepen their sense of belonging to the Church. Naturally, they will then give more to sustain the community, thus achieving the goal of self-support. At the same time, church leadership and religious life will spontaneously appear in the Christian community, eventually producing qualified and capable priests, Sisters and Brothers to fulfill the requirement of self-government. Clergy and church leaders will then most likely become involved in developing an indigenous theology which will blend the positive values of traditional culture with divine revelation and church tradition.

A Changing Church

The church of Hong Kong is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Many parishes already have trained lay people to take up various pastoral ministries including the ministry of the word and sacramental ministries. The laity bring Holy Communion to the sick, lead prayer groups, or preside at liturgical services in the absence of a priest. This is already quite common practice. What is even more remarkable is the number of lay Catholics who volunteer as catechists and take responsibility for parish catechumenates. Bible study groups continue to grow and expand and Catholics are becoming more aware of their responsibility to materially support the church. The one regret we have is that vocations to the priesthood and religious life are still in short supply. Many religious congregations have only one or two aspirants, and in the last few years, only one new seminarian has entered the diocesan seminary each year. So, self-government in the diocese is a goal still to be attained.

Foreign missionaries still account for half the priests in Hong Kong. Their presence, besides helping to solve the heavy pastoral workload of the local church, also adds to the pluralistic

nature of the Hong Kong diocese. They also serve as reminders to the local church of its mission mandate to preach the Gospel to the non-believer.

In the past, when China's self image was weakened by inner turmoil and outside pressure, its citizens tended to accept as superior everything that was foreign. In addition, the local Chinese church was overly dependent on foreign churches for money and personnel. The older generation of Catholics still have a high regard for foreign missionaries and tend to place them on a higher pedestal than the local clergy. Today, local clergy are assuming more and more of the leadership roles in the local church and foreign missionaries are stepping back into auxiliary roles.

Foreign Missionaries

What attitude should foreign missionaries adopt? What contribution can they still make to the local church? Many find themselves in a perplexing situation. Some who in the past held positions of authority find it difficult to adapt to the present reality. They often are critical of and unsatisfied with the new turn in events, even at times making their complaints known in the mass media. The younger generation of foreign missionaries have a feeling of uncertainty, of not knowing what course to take. Some choose a passive role, not willing to take any initiative. Others will now and again express an opinion, but when objections are raised

by members of the Chinese clergy or Catholics, who in their eyes represent the "Chinese point of view," they make a prudent retreat.

Actually, I think that foreign missionaries should be definite about one important fact; namely, they come from a background and culture where the faith is much older and more deep-seated than that of the local Catholics. This rich deposit of faith helps to remind the local church to measure its faith in terms of what is lasting and eternal. While the strong point of the local clergy is that they are able to integrate the faith into local life and culture, the special contribution of foreign missionaries is that they transmit the deposit of faith and help to deepen it in the local church communities.

We are all aware that in Communist countries the activities of the Catholic Church are subject to grave restrictions. While the Basic Law guarantees that the situation in Hong Kong will be different, the church in Hong Kong must still be prepared for any eventuality. The example foreign missionaries give, by assuming more humble roles of service, is a reminder to the local church that it must base its hope on sinking its roots into deeper ground. Even if freedom of religion is compromised in the future and religious activity and the freedom to preach the Gospel are subject to government restrictions, the church will still be present to bear witness to the Gospel.

5. A BRIDGE CHURCH

Since the late 1970's when Deng Xiaoping assumed political power and the Communist Party began to promote the four modernizations, religious believers in China have been treated with a greater degree of tolerance and allowed more room for activity. However, Article 36 of the 1982 Constitution, still makes a distinction between "freedom to believe in religion" and "religious activity." It points out that the state protects "normal" religious activity. In

other words, religious activities which have not obtained government approval are always open to the possibility of being labelled "counter-revolutionary."

The Patriotic Association

In 1980, the Catholic Church in China reorganized its structures. The Patriotic Association, established in 1957, is responsible for the Church's external affairs, while the Bishops' Conference is

responsible for its internal affairs. However, the relationship between the two bodies, has not yet been spelled out. Moreover, in several cases the same people hold positions of authority in both organizations. Placing this to one side, we can see from the statistics - about 3,000 churches reopened along with 24 seminaries and more than 37 Sisters' novitiates - that the Communist government has shown a certain sincerity in its open door policy.

As a result of over 30 years of isolation from the outside world, many Patriotic Association bishops and priests live and work under trying conditions. Personally they face a number of psychological and spiritual problems; from without they also must face the difficulty of catching up with the spirit of Vatican Council II. Their most important problems at the present time, however, are not doctrinal, but pastoral.

Catholics in China

The majority of the more than 8 million Catholics in China do not participate in the Patriotic Association. Among them are members of the clergy. The courageous loyalty of this group, which has made great contributions to preserving the integrity of the faith, is worthy of our admiration. However, they are even more isolated and almost completely cut off from present day church trends, especially from an ecclesiology that stresses community and the necessity for Christians to live as brothers and sisters, giving support and encouragement to one another. They could be more open, more understanding, and more compassionate towards efforts to foster communion among all Catholics.

In order to receive the sacraments, Catholics who do not belong to the Patriotic Association will sometimes attend a church which is administered by the Association. Moreover, in some places, where Patriotic Association clergy and laity lack credibility or are unwelcome by the people, non-Association clergy are permitted to do pastoral work in churches which display the Association's sign. Also, some clergy, who in the past refused to join the Association and spent many years in prison, have come forward to take up their priestly work again.

A Church in Flux

China's social and political situation is in a continual state of flux. It is difficult to paint a clear and complete picture of the church. She has suffered deep wounds in her recent past, which only love can cure. She is a pluralistic church which at one and the same time faces both crises and opportunities. She is subject to great pressures, but at the same time continues to receive abundant graces. The Chinese Catholic Church has been under even greater pressure since the "June 4th" crack-down. The government has adopted even stricter measures in its dealing with the "Underground Church."

However, after the visit of Deng Xiaoping to south China in early 1992, the political climate has turned warmer and thus the Church is enjoying more toleration. No matter what, the Holy Spirit is always with the Church, breaking through the barriers erected by systems and continuing God's divine action. Although the future is uncertain, we know that we are called to respond in faith to the demands of 1997 and beyond.



93/89

mission moments

REFUGEES

(THE NETHERLANDS)

At the beginning of 1992 I received a telephone call from St. Paul's Church in Rotterdam. "Was I prepared to take a young Romanian couple into my house temporarily?" They were refugees and the woman was about five months pregnant. I said yes, even though I had never seen or spoken with these people. We agreed that they would come to me the next day. We communicated with each other in a mixture of English and German. I said: "We don't know each other, but my name is Piet and I would first like to know your names." So I was able to welcome Gratiela and Aurel by name. Together we furnished their room. They couldn't get over what had happened to them, having a room for themselves again after such a long time. I didn't concern myself with the procedures for their stay permit (I left that up to other entities) nor for the reason for their coming here. I simply accepted that they were here and that they needed to be helped. Nevertheless, slowly but spontaneously, their story came out.

In November 1991 they had left their birthplace of Timisoara. This is the place where a mass grave was discovered in 1989

which was the spark that led the local people to rise up against the tyrannical regime of Ceausescu. The rebellion quickly spread from there to the whole country and a short time later Ceausescu was arrested and executed.

They travelled to the Netherlands by hitchhiking and taking public transportation for short distances. They ended up first in a refugee center in Flevoland with 500 people and later in Drenthe with 100 refugees of different nationalities.

Although in Drenthe they received a lot of support from the church, they could see that there were few prospects in the province. They read something in the newspaper about Rotterdam and decided to go there.

In Rotterdam, all available room was filled with refugees, men and women living in separate quarters. This led to their telephone call to me. The following day they told me that they put their subsidy from the church - 100 guilders a week - together with that of another Romanian couple, because this way they could buy food together in the market and could cook more economically. Would I find it inconvenient if they ate together at my house? The following day we had two more people at the table, Toni and Cornel. When this had gone on for a week or so I noticed that it was more and more dif-

ficult for Toni and Cornel to go back to the Pauluskerk after their meal. Their eyes were constantly directed to the small guestroom that I still had free. I said: "If you can manage to get two beds in there, you may have the room." And of course, they succeeded and they beamed as if they had been given a room in a four star hotel.

As I write this, they have been in my house about 15 weeks and I am thinking to myself: taking in refugees can be so simple. I give them a home in a space that is available at the moment and I have also been able to help them to put together baby outfits, for which I have had an unbelievable amount of cooperation. The secretary of the church council of St. Joseph's parish spontaneously offered to teach Gratiela and Aurel Dutch and his daughter Miriam is giving English lessons to Toni and Cornel because they are oriented towards going to Australia.

The women take care of the household and I help the men with small jobs in and outside the house so that they can save a little money for the babies that are on the way.

The births will take place in the St. Franciscus Gasthuis. I shall unfortunately have to find them another place to live, for then the house will become too small.

I am not looking forward to the day that they go, for I have experienced this whole affair more as a blessing than as a task.

Ref. Piet Simons, CICM
CHRONICA - CICM
Jan-Feb. 1993

SHARING HOPE

(TAIWAN)

Looking out over the South China Sea from Ling Chiu Mountain on Taiwan's northern tip is a vast expanse of blue-sparkling blue ocean, powder blue sky.

Master Hsin Tao, 46 year old founder of Wu Sheng Monastery, bearded, saffron-robed monk with stocking cap and a necklace of ruby-red beads walks forward out of the clouds, smiles, gives me a long, warm embrace and welcomes each member of Kuangchi's TV crew.

Master Hsin Tao took me to a cave in the rocky side of the mountain. In those bare, cramped corners, he had spent two full years in solitary meditation, eating only powdered flower petals and drinking rich mineral water from an adjoining spring. He remained in excellent health for the entire two years. On occasion he discovered poisonous snakes in his cave right under the rock where he sat in meditation. They never disturbed him.

"Then one day, it occurred to me: We're only given a few years of life. Better not spend too much time in meditation. There's work to be done." His lifestyle changed. He began to

build his monastery and start social works, environmental projects, cultural projects, plans to establish a museum of world religions. Now, over 70 monks, nuns and followers live in the monastery next to the cave and the spring, overlooking the sparkling blue sea.

I felt a kinship with him. I could see parallels between his and my own spiritual journey. I shared his hopes for a better Taiwan, a better Asia, a better world. I understood why our Asian Bishops now insist that dialogue with religions is essential to missionary work.

In Master Hsin Tao, I recognized a brother, a partner, an apostle. As he spoke of his reverence for the love he discovered in his heart while sitting in a cold cave, I thought of other Wise Men in another cave. Was his discovery all that different from theirs?

Ref. Jerry Martinson, SJ
COMPANY LINK. Vol. XII,
No. 1, Jan. 1993

REACHING OUT

(UNITED STATES)

Two by two, they walk the cracked pavements of the city. They are looking for treasure - the treasure of a few moments to spend with a woman who everyone else seems to consider a waste of time. The woman may appear to be as broken as the sidewalks and windows, but she is precious in the eyes of Genesis House.

Genesis House outreach workers are health educators who

traverse some of the meanest streets in Chicago to meet with the women who work those streets, the women involved in prostitution. They build trust and they build relationships that will one day bring their treasures to the front door of Genesis House. But even before the women come to Genesis House, our outreach workers give them HIV and health information and education that can save their lives.

Genesis House offers health education, outreach, and advocacy services to women who appear in the courts and languish in the lock-ups of Chicago. Wise and sympathetic judges who agree that women need something more positive than incarceration and punishment have built a partnership with Genesis House through which our health educators and volunteers meet with women held on prostitution charges.

The driving force behind our outreach programme is Philippa Lawson, the HIV / Health Programme Director of Genesis House. Philippa is a nationally recognized speaker and activist on issues related to women and AIDS, prostitution, and addiction.

FIGHTING ABUSE AND PAIN

"Nearly all of the women who come to Genesis House are incest survivors and / or come from physically abusive childhoods. By the time they arrive at our door, all of the women have been sexually and physically abused as adults," she says. "One of the women recently said to me: 'Sure, I've been raped...many times. That's just part of life.'

"The consequences of such abuse include low self-esteem, addiction, emotional instability, unhealthy and depen-

dent relationships, poor educational ability, self-negation, and other destructive behaviors," Philippa continues. "The lifestyle puts the women at great risk for contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases."

The value of the programme can be attributed to the commitment and enthusiasm of the outreach team, most of whom are graduates of the Genesis House residential programme. Philippa emphasizes that the outreach programme is closely linked with the services provided within Genesis House itself.

Through the outreach programme, the seeds of hope are planted while the women are still out there, caught up in the life. When the seeds germinate and sprout, our doorbell rings and our nurturing and cultivation can truly begin.

Ref. GENESIS HOUSE NEWS NOTES
Vol. V, No. 2, Autumn 1992
911 West Addison Street,
Chicago, IL 60613, U.S.A.

HEALTH CARE

(LIBERIA)

INTRODUCTION

St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital, established by the Hospitaller Order of the Brothers of St. John of God in 1963, was closed from August 1990 until February 1991. Since re-opening, donations have been received from international

Catholic institutions towards the rehabilitation of the hospital. However, despite these donations, drugs and medical supplies have had to be purchased from Europe.

SEVERE FINANCIAL CRISIS

Earlier this year, before the recent outbreak of renewed fighting, Mr. Enda Byrne of Caritas Sweden visited the hospital. He made the following observations concerning the severe financial crisis that the hospital is facing:

1. St. Joseph's is now the only hospital with a full range of services in the war-ravaged city of over 600,000 people. The Swedish Relief Hospital on the other side of the city, heavily financed by the Swedish Government via UNICEF, has now been turned over to a private consortium of Liberian doctors. The level of fees charged now puts it outside the scope of the great majority of people.

2. With the opening of roads into the city, the movement of people into Monrovia is placing extra burdens on St. Joseph's.

3. The Brothers' firm commitment to serving the poorest sections of the community has obliged them to resist the option of increasing fees to a level which would cover costs. They have, however, implemented a 20% reduction in staffing levels, a 50% cut in generator fuel consumption and an increase in fees for those who can pay.

The hospital's major problem is in trying to cover the recurring costs at a time when the economy in Liberia has

broken down, resulting in widespread unemployment and poverty. As a consequence, the hospital went from being 88% self-supporting before the war to 1% in mid 1991. This has now been increased to approximately 20%

ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS SINCE THE RENEWED FIGHTING IN OCT. 1992

The number of patients, especially children, has increased beyond the capabilities of the hospital. These average about 200 daily in the Outpatients' Dept. of the hospital, and about 100 daily in the outreach clinic at New Kru Town. Beds have been increased in the Pediatric Dept. to take care of children's admissions. The occupancy of the hospital is 100%.

Displaced persons in Monrovia at present are about 75,000 - packed into some form of shelters. The hospital is mainly concentrating on medical cases, obstetrics and gynecology, and general surgery.

There is a lot of work to be done under very difficult circumstances. The staff are working very well considering that they have their own problems of insecurity. Practically all the people who come to the hospital are treated free of charge. Some of them even have to be clothed because they have lost most of their belongings in the fighting. Many have also lost members of their families.

Ref. LIBERIA WORKING GROUP
No. 7. Jan. 1993

COMING EVENTS

CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE

March 11

WOMEN IN ISLAM
Speaker: Lucie Prouost, MSOLA

March 25

PHILIPPINES: MUSLIM CHRISTIAN RELATIONS
Speaker: Sebastiano D'Ambra, P.I.M.E.

Both of the conferences are scheduled for 16.00 - 18.30 p.m.
at The SVD College, via dei Verbiti, 1

May 18-22,

AFRICA: QUESTIONS AND PROPOSALS TO THE CHURCH

VILLA CAVALLETTI

Speakers: Bishop Anselme Sanon - Sister Teresa Okure, SHCJ

(Early registration is recommended)
(English, italiano, français, español)

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