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CONTENTS

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PHILIPPINES – INDONESIA – PACIFIC ISLANDS

Mary John Mananzan, OSB

**THE PHILIPPINE CHURCH –
PASTORAL OPTIONS FOR THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND** 164

**ASIA: A MISSIONARY CHALLENGE
TO THE PHILIPPINE CHURCH** 177

M. Sastrapratedja, SJ

**THE INDONESIAN MISSIONARY CHURCH –
HOPES AND PROBLEMS** 182

THE INDONESIAN CHURCH – THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM 186

Ennio Mantovani, SVD

THE TRANSFORMING ROLE OF THE CHURCH 193

**WINDS OF CHANGE AND THE MISSION
OF THE CHURCH IN THE PACIFIC** 205

SEMINAR PERSONNEL AND PARTICIPANTS 216

COMING EVENTS 220

EDITORIAL

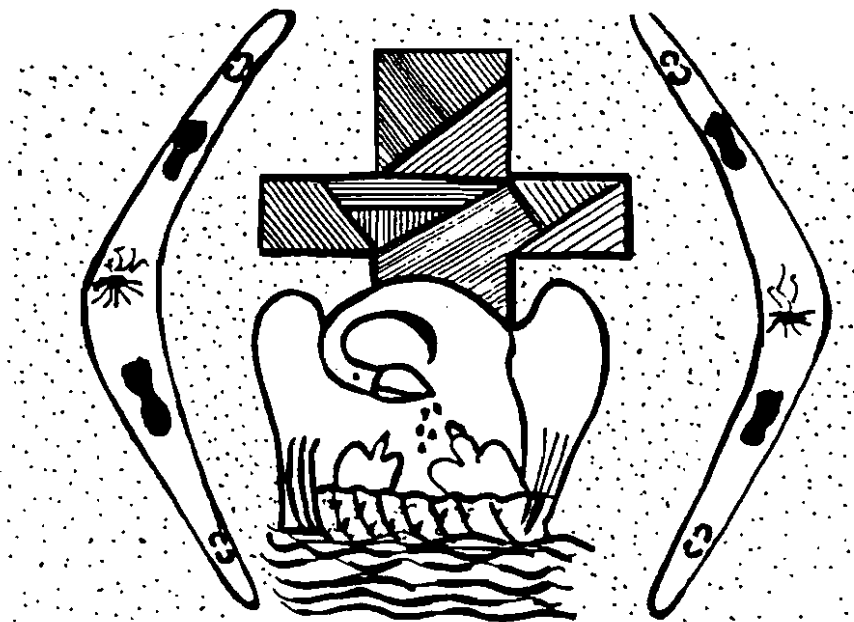
We are glad to be able to present to you again, as always in June, in a double number of SEDOS, the conferences given at our traditional four-day residential seminar on Mission. Once again members of 50 congregations joined us in our effort to know better and discern together the missionary task of a local Church.

This year's session was dedicated to the missionary Churches in the Philippines, Indonesia and the Pacific Islands. The meeting represented the conclusion of a cycle of study sessions dedicated to various local Churches in all corners of the world. The Church in Africa and Latin America (1992), in Africa (1993), in India, China and Japan (1994) and this year: **The Church in the Philippines, Indonesia and the Pacific**. For the next two years or so, we plan to take up more general, fundamental questions on Mission and then prepare ourselves with specific sessions for the jubilee of the year 2000.

SISTER MARY JOHN MANANZAN, OSB., from the Philippines, spoke on: **"The Philippine Church: Pastoral Options and Challenges"**, dwelling especially on the historical background as a necessary condition to understand the situation today. In her second conference, **"Asia, a Missionary Challenge to the Philippine Church"**, she elaborated in more detail the paradigm shifts taking place at present in missionary theology.

FATHER MICHAEL SASTRAPRATEDJA, SJ., introduced us in his first conference: **"The Indonesian Missionary Church — Hopes and Problems"**, to the challenges of a small minority Church in this immense country. He showed how the response of the Church is conditioned by the present economic, social, political and cultural developments taking place. In his second conference: **"The Indonesian Church — the Challenge of Islam"** he explained to us the special character of Islam in Indonesia and how it conditions the prospects of 'inter-religious dialogue'.

FATHER ENNIO MANTOVANI, SVD., an Italian anthropologist and missionary who has worked for many years in the Melanesian Pastoral Institute, spoke on the historical role of the Church in Papua New Guinea: **"The Transforming Role of the Church — Past and Future from the Perspective of the Present"**. He showed us how in many cases the Church has remained too 'western' in her missionary approach. In his afternoon conference: **"Winds of Change and the Mission of the Church in the Pacific"**, he distinguished well between the answers of "the New Religious Groups" (NRG) and the traditional 'Mainline Churches' (MLC). Contextual reflection and action is needed, "A simple and clear theology of the Kingdom which motivates to action".



OPENING - from a Group

We believe in an integrated and wholistic approach to mission.

We believe that God calls us to respect the religious traditions and history of a people's entire journey with God. Long before Christianity entered their lives, God was with them.

We believe that God calls us to be leaven in society. Through the leavening process of dialogue, we are changed and discover anew the Word spoken to all peoples in the Word which takes flesh in the person of Jesus, alive among us through His Spirit.

We believe that the transforming action of the Spirit invites all peoples to affirm and celebrate their differences and dare to rejoice in this wonderful variety. —

Father Ennio Mantovani made very clear the complication of inculturation. It is even more so because it is not simply the Westerner vis-à-vis the other; among missionaries themselves in community, there is a tremendous amount of intermingling of cultures and it is all of this that is 'inflicted' on the receiving cultures.

No matter how complicated mission is because of the great need for inculturation, Ennio left us with hope; we neither wish to continue in our mistakes...no matter how 'successful'...nor do we need to.

We might gain invaluable insights through humbly probing the anger of our young indigenous priests and religious and laity.

We need to change the situation by applying pastoral solutions, constantly asking, 'what would Jesus do?'

A helpful approach is consistent application of pastoral theological reflection in community. —

With Sister Mary John Mananzan, we looked at the history of the Philippines from the viewpoint of the people. She helped us look again at what we have done (how we have approached the people) and to ask ourselves if we continue to impose the same way. However subtle our own racism may be, we need to name it and change it.

Sister Mary John asked: 'Who has the right to criticise the culture?' A good non-judgemental approach might be through the proverbs of the people...which they themselves can compare with the Bible. —

Father Micheal Sastrapratedja left us with a task: the main thrust of the Catholic Church in the future must be to respond to the question: 'What is the meaning of being Catholic?' —

THE PHILIPPINE CHURCH — PASTORAL OPTIONS FOR THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND

Mary John Mananzan, OSB

THE PHILIPPINE CHURCH:

PASTORAL OPTIONS AND CHALLENGES

1. INTRODUCTION:

It was a brief shining moment — the EDSA EVENT of 1986. But as sisters, priests, and lay people — 2 million strong — went out into the Edsa highway, facing the tanks and pleading with the soldiers to go back to their barracks to avoid bloodshed, we felt like the new people of God experiencing our own exodus. And as we saw Ferdinand Marcos capitulating on TV ending 20 years of dictatorship, we rejoiced and were proud that the Church played a tremendous role in this liberation. Of course the euphoria faded away and we did not see a fundamental change in our society, but we will always hold that glorious moment as a collective memory giving us hope for our ever continuing struggle to realise the Reign of God on earth.

This paper will trace first of all the journey of the Church towards that moment and go beyond to the prospects for the future. Then it will reflect on the challenges it faces as a Church in Asia. At this point I have to give the parameters of the paper. It will focus mainly on the Catholic Church. It will be from the point of view of a Catholic religious sister who, in spite of belonging to the middle class, has opted for the poor and has struggled with them for at least 20 years in the hope of attaining a fuller humanity in a renewed Philippine society.

2. A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To understand the pastoral prospects of the Church, it is necessary to trace its history, which in turn necessitates an understanding of its pre-history in the pre-colonial society.

i. The Pre-Colonial Society

The group of islands which would later be known as the Philippines, did not constitute a nation before the coming of the West, but were rather separate principalities with their own local rulers, grouped in communities according to economic, political and religious interests. It had a subsistence economy, with a communal property system characterised by communal productive activities and a flourishing trade with the Chinese.

The people spoke eight major languages and numerous dialects and possessed a system of writing and their literacy was attested to by Spanish writers.

The religion of the people consisted of spirit worship which pervaded all the aspects of their life. Different tribes had different beliefs but common features included a general belief in a chief deity considered creator and in lesser divinities called *anitos*. They also believed in good and bad preternatural beings, in life after death where the good are rewarded and the bad are punished. Religious rites accompanied all the important personal or communal events performed chiefly by women priests called *babaylanes*. However, there were no temples; the people used natural sites for their ceremonies. The religious system of the people did not have the sophistication reached by the religions prevailing in other Asian countries at this period of time like Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam.

What I would like to focus on in the pre-colonial society is the egalitarian status of women. We do not have evidence of a matriarchal or a matrilineal society but women enjoyed a remarkable freedom and active participation in all aspects of societal life. First of all daughters were very welcome in the family because dowries and bride service was rendered by men to their prospective brides. There was no concept of virginity and so parents did not feel the need of overprotecting their daughters of

limiting their movements more than they did for their sons. Women were active in all kinds of economic pursuits, managing farms, trading with the Chinese, etc. In fact economic contracts at that time were valid only with the signature of the woman. In the political field, a woman could succeed as chief of a tribe if she were the first child. In the religious field, she was the spiritual leader of the community and as has been mentioned the main celebrant of the rituals which were of tremendous importance to the community.

ii. *Plantatio Ecclesiae* — The Coming of Christianity

The Church was born in the Philippines at sword point. This caesarean birth took place during the process of the Spanish conquest and colonisation of the islands which they named Philippines in honor of King Philip II of Spain. The focus of this section will be the circumstances and methods of evangelisation as well as the role of the Church in the establishment of the Spanish Rule in the Philippines.

The first conversion was made when Magellan "discovered" the islands and converted 2,200 people in the space of 40 days, in the following manner reported by Pigafetta:

The said King replied that he wanted to be a Christian, but none of his main followers wanted to obey him, they saying that they were men like him (therefore free to decide). Thereupon the captain had all the main followers of the King called and told them that if they did not do as the King did, he would have them killed and would give all their possessions to the King. They all replied that they would obey him.

Naturally most of these "converts" fell away when Lapu-lapu killed Magellan in a battle and the Spanish invaders had to leave.

The systematic evangelisation of the Philippines was launched with the coming of the Augustinians with Miguel Lopez de Legaspi in 1565 led by Fray Andres de Urdaneta. From island to island the missionaries accompanied the *conquistadores* as "holy guides to unfurl and wave the banners of Christ even to the remotest parts of the islands and to drive the devil from the tyrannical possession which he had held for so many ages usurping himself the adoration of these peoples".

The Augustinian pioneers were soon followed by the Franciscans (1577), the Jesuits (1581), the Dominicans (1587) and the Recollects (1606). To facilitate the missionary activity, the archipelago

was divided among the five Orders in fixed but flexible regions.

It is important at this point to mention the missiological discussion at this time, whether to preach Christianity as a continuation and in relation to indigenous beliefs and customs (de Nobili and Ricci), or to reject these completely to demonstrate the uniqueness and radical novelty of Christianity. It was unfortunate that the missionaries in the Philippines opted for the latter and set out systematically to destroy the indigenous belief system in the missionary strategy called *extirpacion de idolatria*. Aside from showing the superiority of Christian doctrine to indigenous beliefs, the missionaries resorted to force, destroying the objects of worship in a public bonfire, and whipping religious adherents in public. Considered as the main obstacle

Another missiological discussion was whether missionaries should be accompanied by soldiers. The instruction of the King was for peaceful methods. But in actual practice the sword most often went with the cross.

to evangelisation, the *babaylanes* were ferreted out mercilessly and publicly humiliated by cutting their long hair in public gatherings called *auto da fé*. Children were used to spy on their parents and to report if they were still performing "pagan" rituals.

Other missionary methods used: were catechising through Christian doctrine manuals that were explained in the context of the worship the people were obliged to go everyday. There was also some street preaching. The common method used was the memorising and chanting of the questions and answers in the Catechism. Indirect methods of conversion were also used which relied on children as important agents of conversion and also on the women who usually became very zealous co-workers in reaching the men of the community. The "vertical" method was also found effective, which consisted in first winning over the upper strata of society, in particular the chiefs of the tribes and their families which usually resulted in the conversion of their followers.

One important missionary method was the so-called *reduccion* which consisted in making the people give up living in isolated places in the mountains by means of force and the confiscation of property. They were gathered into the town, made to live together in a social organisation and per-

suaded to give up their old customs and mode of life. For this purpose, fiestas, processions, plays and masses celebrated with pomp and accompanied by music and singing were introduced to attract the people. This meant the virtual hispanisation of society.

Another missiological discussion was whether missionaries should be accompanied by soldiers. The instruction of the King was for peaceful methods. But in actual practice the sword most often went with the cross.

Related to this was the controversy regarding the legitimation of the continued dominion of Spain over the Philippines. Actually no law justified the continuation of Spanish rule since even the First Council of Manila (1582) admitted that the titles of legitimation in the natural order did not apply, since the King had only given the Captains and other secular authorities the right to preach the Gospel but

An appalling consequence of Spanish colonisation was the domestication of the *mujer indigena*. Shocked by her freedom the Spanish friars resolved to remould her, through religion and education, to resemble the Spanish woman of the Siglo de Oro who lived like a contemplative nun.

not to take what was owned by others. So they had to look for another reason, namely that the right to preach the Gospel includes sending soldiers to protect the missionaries and that the primitive state of the culture of the *indios* and the inability of their princes to rule them properly were unfavourable conditions for preaching the Gospel. Therefore they first had to be colonised in order that they could be evangelised.

These missionary methods were successful to a certain extent. There were genuine conversions both personal and communal. But there was likewise resistance or selective acceptance of Christian beliefs and practices. The people for a long time never quite left their ancient beliefs at the deepest level of their psyche, giving rise to what Fr Bulatao would call "split level Christianity" in the Philippines. On the surface there was conformity with Christian beliefs, but these were juxtaposed with former beliefs and sometimes even given meaning that would fit with their world view and ancient rituals or customs. For example, medals, the holy

oils or holy water would be used as *anting antings* or the unintelligible Latin words of the mass would be incorporated by the *babaylanes* into the magic words of the formula of their amulets. Later on, when the burden of oppression would lay heavily on the people, they would make use of what they learned from the missionaries like the *pasyon* and the *confradias*, the idea of a Messiah, etc., to give expression to their suffering and to rally against their oppressors.

An appalling consequence of Spanish colonisation was the domestication of the *mujer indigena*. Shocked by her freedom the Spanish friars resolved to remould her, through religion and education, to resemble the Spanish woman of the *Siglo de Oro* who lived like a contemplative nun. Thus, Western patriarchy was introduced into society which soon took root, not only in the laws, customs, and mores but even in the very attitude and consciousness of the people.

The fact that the preaching of the Gospel was done in the context of colonisation would set the tone for future developments and identify the Church with power and force. The element of coercion could not be eradicated in spite of the genuine zeal of the early missionaries to attract the people to the values of Christianity. The option of the missionary mode of implantation of a radically new belief, instead of building on the old in the manner of Ricci and Nobili may be why the people never really gave up their beliefs, leaving these intact at the very deep level of their being. By invoking the preaching of the Gospel to legitimate the continued Spanish dominance in the islands made the Church and Church people during this early period, whether they liked it or not, and in spite of their good intentions and personal integrity, ideological agents of the political power of their time. In subsequent periods, it would prove difficult for the Church to shake off this role, although again and again elements in it would make efforts to break through this pattern.

In the following stages in Church history these two forces: political legitimisers and prophetic resistance would be present in the Church.

iii. Legitimation and Resistance in Philippine Church History

iii.a. In the 17th Century

In the 17th century, the Church was confronted by both external and internal conflicts. There were the Dutch wars, the Moro conflict, the Visayan uprising, the Church and State controversies and the internal Church conflicts. There is no need to go

into these events in detail. I will mainly focus on the role of the Church in these events.

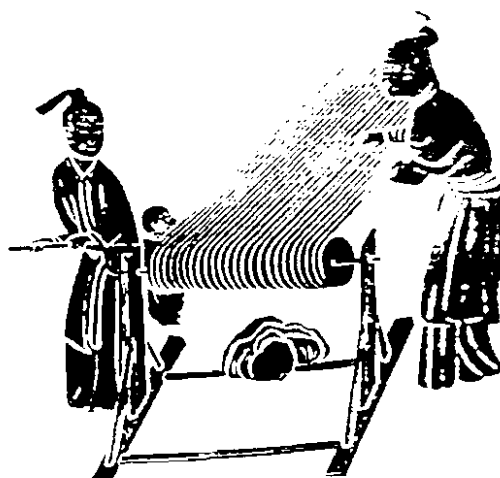
The Dutch-Spanish rivalry over the Moluccas occasioned the Dutch invasion of the Philippines in the first half of the 17th century. The result of this was the exaction of more tribute and forced labour from the people. This caused dislocation in the growing Christian communities since the men had to go to far places to cut timber and build ships. And since conversion to Christianity was synonymous with being subject to Spain and therefore subject to tribute and forced labour, many refused to be converted. There was some denunciation of this oppression to the King by some priests and Archbishop Miguel Garcia Serrano, but these protests lacked the "prophetic tone of indignation at outraged justice" because the threat of the Protestant Dutch meant for the Church the endangering of the Catholic faith. Filipino recruits were coerced to fight beside the Spanish soldiers, and missionaries helped in this recruitment by telling the converted Christians that a Dutch victory would mean their falling into the hands of heretics.

The Moro wars could be seen as an actual continuation of the *reconquista* against the Moors of Spain whom the Spaniards had just conquered before they set out to conquer the New World. The Moslems in the Philippines, named *Moros* by the Spaniards, of course tenaciously defended their land from the Spanish invasion and attempts at proselytism. This basic human right of defence of their life, property and culture was interpreted by the Spaniards as piracy and wanton pillaging. It is to be noted that the protection of the Christians from the *Moros* was one of the justifications for the continued Spanish occupation of the Philippines. These wars were to influence subsequent history because they cut a deep wound between Muslim and Christian Filipinos, a problem which survives to this very day.

The burden of the wars and campaigns launched by the Spanish Government caused the oppressed people to break out into a rebellion that swept through the islands from North to South. There was a religious aspect to this rebellion because the leaders were either priests of the ancient beliefs (*Tamblot*), or fallen away Christians (*Bankaw*). A great deal of burning of churches, the capture and killing of priests and attacks on mission establishments followed. The Church played a big role in quelling the angry rebels as Agoncillo points out: "It was not military superiority or effective colonial rule — which would have necessitated hundreds of bureaucrats — but the presence of the clergy that kept the natives in docile and abject submission".

Those who led the resistance were denounced from the pulpits as ingrates, unfaithful apostates, dangerous elements that were to be delivered to the authorities for trial and execution. This showed very clearly the colonial nature of the Church whose interests were basically linked with the colonial secular administration, even if in some instances, because of its own interests, it found itself at odds with its secular counterpart.

And what of the internal Church conflicts? There was at this time tangled conflictual relationships between religious and Bishops, Governor with religious versus Archbishop; Governor and Jesuits versus Archbishop and Dominicans; Governor/Archbishop versus religious Orders, etc. The most serious conflict was the visitation controversy which was the refusal of the religious Orders occupying parishes to be visited by Bishops, on the strength of the *omnimoda* which gave them the right to be exempted from the normal procedures and to perform acts that normally belonged to Bishops. Without going into details about these conflicts, one can only say here that these conflicts which sometimes regarded very trivial matters were a great scandal to the people and the energy of the Church was wasted in infighting at a time when peoples were oppressed by various and unbearable burdens.



iii.b. In the 18th Century — The Question of the Native Clergy

The Church in the Philippines in the 18th century was significantly affected by the regalistic tendencies that came with the change of the ruling dynasty in Spain from the Hapsburgs to the Bour-

ASIA: A MISSIONARY CHALLENGE TO THE PHILIPPINE CHURCH?

Mary John Mananzan, OSB

1. INTRODUCTION:

To be quite honest, the title of this second part of my paper made me uncomfortable. Actually I wrote to the organisers to put a question mark at the end of the title, but that has not been done. So in my paper I am putting the question mark. I will explain my discomfort as I go along. To tackle this topic, whatever it might mean, necessitates a discussion of the situation of Asia as well as the paradigm changes in the concept of mission.

2. THE ASIAN SITUATION

Asia, according to Aloysius Pieris, is characterised by the realities of overwhelming poverty and manifold religiousness. These, according to him, "constitute in their interpenetration what might be designated as the Asian context, the matrix of any theology truly Asian". I would add: also of any Asian missiology.

i. Poverty in Asia

Although the poverty in Asia cannot be reduced to purely economic categories, it is nonetheless very economic. It is a poverty that is rooted in injustice: from within the very inequitable distribution of resources and exploitation from without. First of all, the history of most of the Asian nations is a history of foreign domination. The coming of colonisers disrupted the development of the countries' economic, political and socio-cultural systems and created a local *élite* that continued the exploitation of the people after they left. For the most part, new values and new concepts were introduced which caused cultural alienation.

In a wave of resistance movements Asian countries fought for and won their political independence but although no longer directly ruled by colonising powers they came under some form of neo-colonialism. After the victory of Vietnam, the communist threat led the economic powers to develop what Kitizawa Yoko calls "development dictatorship". This is a development from above and

from outside and maintained by military Governments aimed at eradicating poverty to maintain domestic order. Japan was able to achieve high economic growth by shifting its industrial sectors to Asia. Newly industrialised countries also emerged: Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea. But even for these latter, only the *élite* actually

The presence of strong non-Christian soteriologies in Asia accounts for the lack of success of Christian missionaries in converting the continent to Christianity. There are only 3 per cent Christians in the whole of Asia, half of whom live in the Philippines.

benefited from the economic progress. The other Asian countries accumulated foreign debts which have caused inflation, deficits and a chronic economic crisis which have led to an exodus of migrant workers from their homes.

In order to maintain economic order, many Asian Governments have resorted to dictatorial rule and militarism. There is a great deal of violation of human rights and political corruption is rampant. There is of course the corresponding development of political protest and national liberation movements.

ii. The Religio-Cultural Reality of Asia

I will draw heavily from Aloysius Pieris' characterisation of this aspect of Asian reality. According to him the three distinctive features of this religio-cultural dimension of Asia are: a) linguistic heterogeneity, b) the integration of the cosmic and metacosmic elements in Asian religions and c) the overwhelming presence of non-Christian soteriologies.

bons, as well as by the liberal ideas which came with the French Enlightenment.

Due to the liberal and progressive ideas, economic planning and diversification of trade was introduced in the Philippines. The opening of the country to world trade introduced further liberal ideas which sowed the seeds for the development of a national consciousness.

On the other hand, the link with France brought Spain into war with England which resulted in the British invasion of the Philippines. This was the first major threat to Spanish sovereignty in the islands exposing Spain's vulnerability which encouraged a series of uprisings in the country. These, in turn, underlined the indispensability of the religious Orders which gave them the leverage to successfully oppose the attempts of the Archbishops to implement Episcopal Visitations and the Governors to enforce the procedures of the Patronato Real. The Bourbons alarmed at the growing power of the religious Orders decided to curb their powers. This led to a greater effort in implementing the Patronato Real which led among other things to the expulsion of the Jesuit Order from all Spanish dominions in 1768. Secularisation of the parishes drew attention to the urgency of training a native clergy.

Although theoretically, it was clear that a native secular clergy was a natural development in the evangelisation of peoples, the structures and privileges of the religious Orders prevented them from doing their task of training a local clergy because of self interest. When in 1720 a definitive policy of ordaining Filipinos to the priesthood was decreed, Fray Gaspar de San Agustin wrote the following vehement letter of protest:

...their (local clergy) pride will be aggravated with their elevation to so sublime a state; their avarice with the increased opportunity of preying on others; their sloth with their no longer having to work for a living; and their vanity with the adulation that they must heed... desiring to be served by those whom in another state of life they would have had to respect and obey; in such wise that the malediction of Isaia 24, shall overtake this nation: "it shall be as with the people, so with the priest". For the indio who seeks holy orders, does so, not because he has a call to a more perfect state of life, but because of the great and almost infinite advantage which accrue to him along with the new state of life which he chooses... Imagine the airs with which such a one will extend his hand to be kissed! What an incubus upon the people shall his father be and his mother, his sisters, and his female cousins, when they shall have become great ladies over-

night!... for if the indio is insolent and insufferable with little or no excuse, what will he be when elevated to so high a station? What reverence will the indios themselves have for such a priest, when they see that he is of their colour and race?

Royal decrees did manage to make the religious Orders open the doors to local vocations. The newly ordained priests were however assigned only as coadjutors or assistants to religious parish priests. With the subsequent events of the secularisation of the parishes and the expulsion of the Jesuits, the process was stepped up but in such a devastatingly abrupt and unwise manner as in the case of Archbishop Basilio Santa Justa de Rufina's ordaining even poorly trained seminarians, that a premature responsibility was imposed on an inadequately trained clergy. This, of course, fulfilled the prophecies of doom made by the religious regarding the dire consequences of ordaining *indios* to the priesthood. Comparisons between parishes run by religious and those by the secular native clergy pitted one against the other and since the religious were Spaniards and the secular priests were natives, the whole question would develop into a racial and political enmity of national significance.

iii.c. 19th Century — The Church and the Struggle for Independence

This section will attempt to analyse the role of the Church in the struggle of the people for emancipation. At no time in its previous history will the two poles in the Church be more apparent: one reinforcing the establishment and the other supporting forces for change, as in this period.

The friar would personify the first pole in the Church. Throughout the Spanish Rule in the Philippines, the friars had played a great role from the early days of the pacification when they carried the cross side by side with the sword, to the quelling of the peoples' uprising when they prevented the people from joining in the rebellion against the recruitment of the natives to fight the invaders to preserve the Catholic faith. Then there was the fact that the religious Orders acquired vast tracts of lands that would be known as Friar Lands which were to become one of the causes of the 1896 revolution. The friars were not only ideological agents of the State but were active political actors in the whole scenario prompting a national patriot, Marcelo del Pilar to describe a State of "monastic supremacy in the Philippines".

As a counterpole to the friars were the members of the indigenous secular clergy who became the rallying point for the emerging nationalistic aspirations of the people. This came to a high point in

the execution of the three priests, Gomez, Burgos and Zamora (later on to be referred to as GOMBURZA), who were accused of being the masterminds of the Cavite Mutiny in 1872. Lucio Gutierrez categorically states: "Their death meant the beginning of a permanent struggle for political independence and freedom".

In the revolutionary sentiments that ensued, the friars would become the prime target of attack. On the other hand several native priests became directly or indirectly involved in the Propaganda Movement. The Church would subsequently condemn the revolutionary army, *katipunán*, while many of the indigenous clergy participated in its activities and would recognise the Revolutionary Government it would eventually establish. The most illustrious among these was Gregorio Aglipay, who was appointed military chaplain of the revolutionary army. Later on together with a lay *ilustrado* Isabelo de los Reyes, Aglipay would establish the Philippine Independent Church, which was the first major schism in the history of the Church in the Philippines.

Schumacher gives the following concluding appraisal of the two poles in the Church at this period:

Though reduced to subjection by civil and ecclesiastical policy the Filipino priests were seen as a capable moving force behind a Filipino nationalist movement among the masses. Given the moral and material bankruptcy of the Spanish colonial regime, only one prop could hold that decadent structure up — the power of the Catholic faith — that religious sanction for the Spanish Regime was upheld principally by the friars, and the only threat to the influence of the friars with masses was the Filipino clergy... Even though the intellectual leadership of the nationalist movement had passed from the clergy to the lay intellectuals, the developed nationalism of the 1890's would have been able to move only a small portion of the people had not the influence of the clergy supported it.

iii.d. The Introduction of Protestantism During the American Regime

The Revolutionary Government had just proclaimed the independence of the islands from Spain on 12 June 1898, when another colonial power loomed on the horizon. Because of the Spanish American war that broke out after the bombing of the ship *Maine* at the coast of Havana, the United States under the command of Admiral Dewey appeared in Manila Bay. Spain found a more acceptable way out and after a mock battle, it capitulated to the superior power in the Treaty of

Paris and ceded Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines to the United States. The new Republic found itself at war with the new colonial power. With the capture of the first President of the Republic, Emilio Aguinaldo, the Philippines found itself under a new colonial master.

Once again religion was used to justify the conquest of the islands when President McKinley proclaimed that he was taking possession of the Philippines because God revealed to him that it was the "manifest destiny" of the United States to Christianise its "little brown brothers". So Protestant missionaries in the persons of public school teachers called Thomasites were sent to the Philippines. These were followed by missionaries from different Mission Congregations: the Presbyterians (1899), the Methodists (1899), the Baptists (1900), the Disciples of Christ (1901), the Christian Missionary Alliance (1902), and the Seventh-Day Adventists (1906). Alarmed by the spread of Protestantism, the growth of the Philippine Independent Church (Aglipayan Church) and the influence of the Masons who supported the revolution, the Catholic Church in the Philippines appealed to the religious orders

Although theoretically, it was clear that a native secular clergy was a natural development in the evangelisation of peoples, the structures and privileges of the religious Orders prevented them from doing their task of training a local clergy because of self interest.

all over the world and the second wave of missionary influx ensued augmenting the original five Orders that came during the Spanish regime. These put up Catholic schools for boys and girls in order to counteract the influence of the new Churches.

Both Protestants and Catholics connived with the American Government's possession, pacification and domination of the Philippines. The mainline Protestant denominations were the early prophets of "manifest destiny" and the advocates of the "white man's burden". But it was with the Catholic hierarchy that the new colonial Government established an alliance. The property confiscated by the Aglipayans were restored to the Catholic Church. The hierarchy not only helped in the pacification of the islands, the Manila Council of 1907 condemned all types of revolutionary resistance to American rule. Movements of resistance were considered conspiracies against the Church and legitimate

Group - UNE PARABOLE

Un jour, une femme préparait la pâte pour cuire les galettes du repas familial. Elle pétrissait, pétrissait....les galettes seraient belles, ...les galettes seraient bonnes..

Elle avait bien entendu dire que loin, très loin, dans un autre pays, les femmes mettaient 'quelque chose' dans la pâte, les galettes étaient encore plus savoureuses...

Et voilà que son fils rentre à la maison. Il vient de la ville...Il est jeune encore, mais à l'école il apprend tant de sciences extraordinaires, tellement extraordinaires qu'on ne peut les croire...

Aujourd'hui il porte un paquet, une poudre blanche.....Cette poudre qui donne tant de goût aux aliments, qui rend les galettes si savoureuses.

Alors, tout fier, il verse tout le contenu du paquet dans la pâte etcuisent les galettes!... A la première bouchée toute la famille est consternée...Ou bien la poudre n'est pas fondue ou bien la pâte est si piquante... Tout est à jeter! Tout est perdu, et...on reste sur sa faim.

Quelque temps après, le fils revient avec un autre paquet...

Mais il sait davantage, Bon...il ne faut pas tout jeter à la fois, il faut aussi remuer, remuer encore. Mais cette fois la femme juge elle-même ce qu'il est bon de faire.... elle surveille la cuisson, et alors...oui, les galettes ont bon goût, ce goût nouveau qui rend encore meilleures les bonnes galettes d'autrefois..!

authorities and forbade Filipino Christians to enlist or help in any way. This, according to Fr Schumacher "was indicative of the Church's full acceptance of the new regime as the only legitimate one. In spite of this prohibition, members of the native clergy actively joined in the fight against the American invaders, some of whom suffered imprisonment and torture. As Salgado points out, the Church hierarchy wanted the Government's armed repression of the masses, while interdicting the armed struggle of the people against the oppressive State. After the Americans stabilised their rule in the country, the Church hierarchy pursued a policy of non-involvement in political affairs, confining its activities to the administration of the sacraments to prayers and "to things of the spirit". This was definitely beneficial to the State which went on unhampered in its domination of the country.

iii.e. Post Independence — The new Christendom Model

Faced for the first time with rival faiths, the Catholic Church acquired a new militancy. It adopted the New Christendom model of ecclesiology which had the Church in the Constantinian era as inspiration. The aim of this model was to ensure the hold and influence of the Church in all the spheres of society. Mandated organisations for the lay such as the Student Catholic Action, the Sodality, the Legion of Mary, etc., were established for this purpose. Catholic lay people were encouraged to aspire to influential Government posts in order to ensure that policies were not detrimental to the interests of the Church.

By this time the schools founded by the new religious congregations that came in had produced many prominent leaders who were running both the machinery of the State and the economic enterprises. Thus, the Church contributed greatly to the perpetuation of the elitist colonial mentality in the country that bolstered American colonialism and neo-colonialism up to this day.

iii.f. The Post-Vatican Church

The Vatican Council (1962-1965) made a tremendous impact on the life of the Catholic Church in the Philippines. In breaking through the wall of orthodoxy and with the introduction of more progressive ways of thinking with its call for *aggiornamento*, things started to happen in the Church.

In 1965, the Philippines celebrated the 400th anniversary of its Christianisation which reassessed Christianity and called for the responsibility of the Philippines in propagating the faith in Asia. The

Philippine Missionary Society was established to fulfill this task. There was a remarkable biblical and liturgical renewal and a new attention to the role of the laity in the Church. Among the groups, the most positively affected by Vatican II were the religious women, who would begin to have prominent roles not only in the Church but in society.

The years following the Council was a time of ferment, of instability, even of confusion. But this very condition facilitated and prepared the way for significant changes, conditioned also of course by external factors. The growing force of imperialism was bringing about the increasing misery of neo-colonies such as the Philippines. Transnational corporations grew by leaps and bounds tightening the foreign control on the national economy. Church people joined in the questioning of the policies of national development which brought the country deeper and deeper into dependent Capitalism. The theology of liberation in Latin America awakened Church people to the new Christian imperatives in Third World countries. Basic Christian Communities with community organisation (BCC-CO) sprung up everywhere and provided for a real participative decision making in the Church and a venue to work out one's commitment to justice and transformation of society. One model of such an arrangement was the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC), where the Bishops, clergy, religious and the laity together drew up the pastoral programme of the Dioceses and parishes. Unfortunately the red scare brought suspicions about its "being used" politically. Later on the term BCC-CO would be dropped and BCE or Basic Ecclesial Communities would be adopted.

The intensification of social consciousness erupted into the first quarter storm in the late 1960's and early 70's. The answer of the U.S. controlled Marcos Government was the imposition of Martial Law on 21 September 1972. Secular militant groups were rounded up, arrested and detained. Church people found themselves faced with the task of continuing the struggle. This, more than any factor, led to the radicalisation of many Church people. Priests and religious involved themselves in the struggle of the basic masses, some even joining the underground movement and the armed struggle. The stand of the hierarchy was "critical collaboration" which was actually more collaboration than critique. Again the two forces that ran through the history of the Church continued during this period.

A new ecumenism was born. Protestant and Catholic militants found themselves side by side in rallies, demonstrations, teach-ins and public liturgies like the *"Misa ng Bayan"* (Mass of the People) and the *Via Crucis ng Bayan* (Way of the

Prière:

Seigneur, donne-nous de comprendre quel 'sel de la terre' nous sommes! Que nous donnions saveur en nous faisant petits, modestes.

Fais-nous entrer avec respect au coeur de ces cultures à qui nous voulons apporter la Bonne Nouvelle.

Fais-nous croire que tu es arrivé avant nous chez ceux-là mêmes qui accueillent la 'nouveauité'.

Donne-nous de leur faire confiance, de leur permettre d'être eux-mêmes les artisans de l'annonce du message.

Alors, avec eux, ensemble, nous pétrirons ce pain nouveau et savoureux de ta vivante présence. Amen

Cross) and many creative and innovative liturgies that gave room for the workers, peasants and urban poor to express their sufferings and oppression. So this ecumenism did not come from above, was not engaged in doctrinal discussions, but was a common commitment for justice and liberation.

It was these 20 years of involvement with people's struggles that prepared the Church people to answer the invitation of EDSA and to exhibit the force of peoples' power that would reverberate and be emulated in other parts of the world.

Some of the theologians who got involved saw the need of rethinking and reformulation of religious concepts and started to develop what they would call Theology of Struggle. The efforts of this group that are documented in the book, *Religion and society* (1988) would find an indirect confirmation almost 20 years later when the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines opted for the Church of the Poor in 1990 expressing the ideas and the vocabulary which used to be considered subversive and "radical". The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines has set the direction of the Church

towards the next millennium and has drawn up a comprehensive programme of action.

3. THE PASTORAL OPTIONS OF THE CHURCH FOR THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

The decade of the nineties has seen significant changes both in the global and the local scene. There is the dissolution of the Socialist bloc, the leaps in technological development that has ushered in the information age, the rise of the economic tigers in Asia, the crisis of liberation movements, the appearance of new social actors such as women, indigenous peoples and the focus on new social issues such as ecology, women's issues, human rights including the rights of indigenous peoples, etc. What is constant is the issue of poverty and injustice. All these pose a challenge to the pastoral orientation of the Church.

i. Poverty and Justice

In spite of the rise of the newly industrialised nations of Asia (NIC), the majority of Asian people are still poor. In the Philippines, the change after

Religion was used to justify the conquest of the islands when President McKinley proclaimed that he was taking possession of the Philippines because God revealed to him that it was the "manifest destiny" of the United States to Christianise its "little brown bothers".

Marcos did not affect the economic and political orientation of the subsequent Governments. The country still suffers from two fundamental problems: the unequal distribution of wealth and the foreign control of the economy. The foreign debt has risen to \$35 billion and the Government still pays about 40% of its annual budget for the interest of its debt. There has been an exodus of Filipinos abroad (about 8 million) in order to earn a living. There is still graft and corruption in the different levels of the Government and in society in general.

Actually the Church has written a beautiful document: the Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines. On the poor, it writes:

We as Church indeed opt for all men, women and children of the world but above all, preferentially we opt like Jesus for the "little ones",

the poor and marginalised of our societies. This is an essential option of Christian faith, an obligatory choice. Eternal salvation depends on the living out of a love of preference for the poor because the poor and needy bear the privileged presence of Christ. (PCP II, n. 312)

It also called for "people's empowerment":

No social transformation is genuine and lasting where people themselves do not actively participate in the process... In the context of our society today, where the poor and marginalised have little participation.... we realise that the integral development of people will be possible only with their corresponding empowerment... We understand "people power" to include greater involvement in decision-making, greater equality in both political and economic matters, more democracy, more participation (PCP II, n. 326).

So the theory is there. For the Church to be effective pastorally, it must examine itself on these two points within its own life. How poor is the Church in the Philippines? How do the "princes" of the Church and its religious live? How much do people really participate in the decision-making in the Church? In its history how has the Church treated its more "prophetic members"? In its day to day decisions, has it always sided with the poor against the more privileged, who are mostly its benefactors? How much of Church resources, both human and material have been put at the service of "people's empowerment"? How has it concretely supported the struggle of the workers, peasants and urban poor?

With regards to President Ramos' "Philippines 2000", the Churches of Mindanao are to be commended for their prophetic critique of the programme, which is presented as a pie in the sky and a bed of roses for the Filipino people:

We, however, see the programme as disadvantageous to our people: depriving them of their resources and the rights of the indigenous communities to their ancestral domains and depriving the Moro people of their right to self determination and land, a deception of our people because with the emphasis on high technology, they are reduced to being objects rather than subjects of their development; promoting environmental degradation and massive exploitation of our irreplaceable natural resources; creating scarcity of basic necessities due to the insistence on cash crops for exports; stifling the growth of local industries as it adheres to the policies of liberalisation and deregulation; selling our patrimony to foreign interests conceding

to foreign monopolies on intellectual property rights which are detrimental to the Filipinos and other Third World people; and imposing a population management programme that is not acceptable to our Churches.

ii. Women and the Church

This is where the Church's integrity is most tested. If it preaches that women are made to the image and likeness of God as man is, how come there are opportunities for men in the Church that are denied to women? In this regard, the Church must examine its history, its structure, its teachings and its practice.

Up to now, the Church has not apologised for the millions of women burnt at the stake as witches in the middle ages. In the Philippines, it has been shown in the first section of this paper that the friars played the main role in domesticating women depriving them of the active participation in public affairs which they enjoyed in the pre-colonial society.

The interpretation of the Bible, particularly the Creation story has justified the subordination of woman conditioning her to regard herself as secondary to the male and to think of her life as significant only in relation to him. She has been conditioned to feel guilty when she is battered or when raped. The teaching in religious instructions that the ideal woman is the passive, submissive, long-suffering person has developed in her a "victim consciousness" which makes her vulnerable to violence both inside and outside her home. She is told that she has the duty to keep the family together and so she would stay in a marriage where she is personally humiliated and physically battered.

In order to be credible in condemning sexual abuse, the Church must examine, admit and act on the sexual harassments and abuse that are happening in its own house. It should not condone and not cover up misdemeanors of members of the clergy in this matter.

Then it should denounce the different forms of oppression of women, continuing inequality and subordination of women in the home, in the workplace and in society, the ever increasing violence against women in different forms: rape, incest, wife battering; the prevalent trafficking of women in prostitution, mail order brides and in contract work abroad.

With regard to reproductive ethics, I would like the Church also to give a pastoral response to Emma. She was abused when she was 13 and began living with her abuser because "she was no longer a

virgin". He beats her up in fits of jealousy. He expects her always to be ready for his bed. At the age of 25, she has already 5 children. She has given away one child because she cannot feed her. At her fifth pregnancy she almost died. Do we just close our eyes and expect her to have 10 children when she is 30?

Positively, the male in the Church should listen to and learn from women as the Jesuits have resolved to do in their latest document on women issued by their latest Chapter. It should promote the rights of women and the development of their full humanity. They should be given full participation in the ministry of the Church. It should put its human and material resources at the service of women's empowerment, so as to rehabilitate the victims of violence and to develop their potentialities. It should support the women's movement and encourage their leadership in political and social life. It might sound trivial, but it should adopt the inclusive language in its liturgy and in its documents.



The Jesuits have to be commended for the already mentioned Chapter which included a declaration on: *The Jesuits and the Situation of Women in Church and Civil Society*. Imperative to the male members of the Church for their pastoral efforts to be successful in this matter is the internalisation of this document's call for conversion:

...we Jesuits first ask God for the grace of conversion. We have been part of a civil and ecclesial tradition that has offended against women. And, like many men, we have a tendency to convince ourselves that there is no problem. However unwittingly, we have often been complicit in a form of clericalism which has rein-

forced male domination with an ostensibly divine sanction. By making this declaration, we wish to react personally and collectively, and do what we can to change this regrettable situation.

iii. Laity and Youth

For a very long time, the laity was really a second class citizen in the Church. In fact the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church prepared for the First Vatican Council explicitly affirmed that the Church of Christ "is not a community of equals...It is a society of unequals, not only because among the faithful some are cleric and some are laymen, but particularly because there is in the Church the power from God whereby to some it is given to sanctify, teach and govern and to others not". Then Vatican II changed that exclusionist mentality. Efforts were made to include lay people in Parish Councils. Basic Christian Communities started to train lay leaders. PCP II reiterated the sentiments of

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Vatican II. The role of the youth was highlighted in the last celebration of World Youth Day in Manila in January, 1995. In spite of all these, Jose de Mesa, a lay theologian poses the following question:

And yet, might not there be an oversight in the excitement over this rediscovered understanding? There seems to be no recognition here of the psychological hurts and wounds which had been inflicted on the laity for such a long time. These do not simply vanish just because there has been a turnaround regarding the laity's position in the Church. If lay women and men had been taught and treated for a long time (centuries) as inferiors, it is obvious that this cannot be just reversed within a short period of time. Old habits are not easily changed. Apart from the change of consciousness regarding their dignity which must undergo a process there is the issue of psychological hurts which cannot be downplayed or ignored.

It will certainly not help if the clergy in practice still retain this superiority complex. Can members of parish councils really express their opinions? Do

priest directors of schools act in collegial manner with their lay faculty and staff?

Another challenge to the Church is the transparochial religious movements like El Shadai managed and participated in mainly by lay people. Why can these movements gather great masses of people for their services that last two days, something that the ordinary parish cannot do? What needs are they answering which the ordinary structure of the Church does not take into consideration? What effect has the fascination of people in these services on their spirituality?

Finally a delicate matter. What does the Church think of powerful lay *élite* members of the *Opus Dei* who openly show disdain or at least disinterest in the main thrust of Vatican II or even of PCP II, who seem to want to bring the Church back to the Council of Trent?

iv. Cultural Minorities

The so-called tribal Filipinos have never been politically conquered by the foreign countries that occupied the Philippines. But the intrusion of the dominant ethnic majority are making them lose not only their ancestral domains, the ecological balance of their environment, but is also eroding their cultural traditions without benefiting from the development model that the Government has opted for. The present Government's project, Philippines 2000 will make the situation worse.

The Church expresses its concern thus: "Our concern here must be to actively support, promote and accelerate the process of law on their behalf, and be on their side so that their ancestral domains, their cultures, rights and the integrity of their environment be defended, preserved, and promoted" (PCP II, n. 378). I think the Church should also make an effort to study their culture and their spirituality and to see how these could enrich the faith and make it really Filipino. For example the reverence towards creation which our ancestors had and which the tribal Filipinos preserve could have prevented the rape of our forests and their being sold for profit to multi-national corporations. Missionaries who go to them should be careful not to impose the dominant Western culture on them which characterise lowland Christianity.

The largest cultural minority group are the Muslims, who comprise 4% of the population of the Philippines. We have seen how right from the beginning, they were considered by the Spanish missionaries as great obstacles to the Christianisation of the Philippines. Subsequently Christians from the North migrated to the South and occupied their lands. Government development plans do not

usually put Muslim areas as priority. There is thus a deep-seated animosity that has pervaded throughout the ages. The rise of fundamentalism both Christian and Muslim is making the situation worse.

There are on-going efforts towards a Muslim-Christian dialogue by individual people like Bishop Tutud, Fr Mercado, and Fr Sebastiano D'Ambra and Sr Ester Ramos, and by other groups. For example in 1994, the Bishops, clergy, religious and laity of the Churches of Zamboanga, Basilan, Jolo, Tawi-Tawi and Ipil renewed their commitment to inter-religious dialogue with the Muslim people they live with. Recently, from 11-21 February 1995, a conference was held on Christian Fundamentalism and Militant Islam in Asia, in Cagayan de Oro, and the group called upon the Christians of Asia to join them in their following resolve:

1. To refrain from condemning a whole group because of the reprehensible actions of a few;
2. To promote a systematic and integrated study of other religions and the spirituality of dialogue in seminaries and formation houses for religious and laity;
3. To denounce all forms of violence, such as kidnapping and bombing, and to work together with all those who strive for peace;
4. To reject manipulative proselytizing tactics on the grounds that they violate the freedom and dignity of the human person;
5. To work together with Muslims of good will to oppose all forms of oppression, injustice, no matter who the victims might be;
6. To collaborate with Muslims to expose and oppose the caricature of religion so often found in media presentations;
7. To strive not to allow fear to determine our actions, but to harness it for creative initiatives.

v. Pastoral Care for Displaced Filipinos

At no time in our history has there been a displacement of our people as in the last two decades. Militarisation and the anti-insurgency campaign has resulted in internal refugees who have come down or been forced down from their homes to live in unhealthy camps. The eruption of Pinatubo has rendered many people homeless and are still today living in temporary shelters. About eight million Filipinos have left the country to work in many parts of the world suffering all kinds of problems. This has been highlighted recently in the case of

Flor Contemplacion who was executed in Singapore for a crime she has not committed. All these cry out for the pastoral care of the Church.

vi. Preservation of the Environment

An urgent current issue which the Church has continuously and seriously to concern itself with, is the ecological crisis. In 1993, a flush flood of 6 minutes killed 6,000 people in Leyte. The disappearance of our forests and the destruction of our coral reefs and other environmental problems have reached an alarming degree. In this regard, the Church has according to Sean McDonogh, "arrived at the issue, breathless and late". It was only in the Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* that the environment entered into the mainline Catholic social teaching. The Philippine Catholic hierarchy is to be commended for being one of the first in Asia to issue a Pastoral Letter on ecology in January, 1988. The FABC has since then organised a colloquium on ecology Tagaytay in November, 1994, and had taken up the issue in their sixth General Assembly

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in January, 1995. Serious recommendations were drawn up to be acted upon by different bodies. Priests, sisters, laity, educational institutions have also taken up the challenge and creative actions have been initiated in different places. However illegal logging is still going on, economic development projects that endanger the environment are still being launched. Therefore continued vigilance and a more systematic networking of efforts throughout the country must be coordinated.

Aside from assigning the causes of the ecological crisis outside of itself, the Church should also make a self examination and see how a certain mainline theological perspective had also contributed to the problem. There is the anthropocentrism in biblical interpretation which can be gleaned even in the most recent statement of the Holy See at the Rio Conference when it stated that the ultimate purpose of the environmental and developmental programmes is to "place creation in the fullest possible way at the service of the human family". This dominance of humans over creation and their seeming separation from it which is interpreted from the

verse: "Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all the living animals of the earth" could according to Keith Thomas "be easily invoked to legitimise any human exploitation of the natural world". Also in this regard, we can reclaim the value of the cosmic religion of our ancestors who revered nature and apologised before cutting a tree for their needs.

vii. Ecumenism

As has been mentioned before, genuine ecumenism in the Philippines grew out of common commitment and common involvement of Catholics and Protestants in the struggle for justice during the martial law days continuing to this day. There does not seem to be any forward movement on the official level. I believe that if the Catholic Church retains the attitude that "We have the truth and we will be one when our separated brethren have come back to us", I do not believe anything fundamental will change on this level.

viii. The Peace Process

In the internal political conflict between the Government and the armed resistance groups, the Church has offered and should continue to offer its mediating help. It should insist that there can be no lasting peace without justice.

These are the issues which I think the Church must address as it enters the next millennium. For

some of the issues, beautiful documents have been written. For others, some actions have been initiated. For the rest, a major breakthrough is still needed.

Faced with these varied and overwhelming tasks, we are brought back to where we began: that brief shining moment of EDSA when we forgot our differences and acted as one people and we achieved the "impossible". It is such a solidarity that is needed to launch a relevant Church into the next millennium. Mindful of the difficulty the Church faces in the implementation of its vision, the PCP II document concludes:

"Unifying all in Christ" in the Philippines today — it is a mission the difficulty of which we have no illusions about. For it calls on us to go against the grain of everything that we have so far been as a people. It requires that we go beyond family loyalties, political interests, class obsessions, regional jealousies — all those narrow concerns that have made us an ever fractionalised people. It requires that we begin, simply begin, to be more responsive to the demands of the wider and grater good of all.

It is an impossible enterprise. But we dare it with the certainty of the Man who said: "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God". It is with Him, in Him then that we attempt the impossible. This is how we propose to begin being a community of authentic solidarity (PCP II, 665-666).



Language is a way of experiencing reality and the linguistic heterogeneity in Asia shows the many different ways of perceiving reality. It is an index of cultural, religious and socio-political diversity. The tragic thing is that unlike in other continents, Asians can only understand each other in a non-Asian language, English. This has theological and missiological implications.

According to Pieris, "the institutional framework within which Asian religion operates is composed of two complementary elements: a cosmic religion functioning as the foundation, and a metacosmic soteriology constituting the main edifice". By cosmic religion, he means the religion of the people found in Africa, Asia and Oceania, which colonisers would call "animism". In the cultures of these continents, a distinctive form of religiosity develops around the mysterious forces of the universe and of life. These forces merge into the world of invisible powers which appear in various guises in various regions: *Devas* in indianised cultures, *Nats* in Burma; *Phis* in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, *Bons* in Tibet; *Kamis* in Japan; and *Anitos* in the Philippines. In most places this religiosity included wor-

If it is imperative that Christians involve themselves in the struggle of the poor and the oppressed against injustice and to strive for full humanity, Filipino missionaries must be among the prophetic rather than the legitimising elements in the Church.

ship of ancestors and a worshipful awe of nature expressed in rites and rituals and a class of mediators like the shamans or the *babaylans*. In most places these have been assimilated into the metacosmic soteriologies — Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism. In places like the Philippines, where this cosmic religion was not integrated into a metacosmic religion, it was easier for the Spanish colonisers to convert the people to Christianity.

The presence of strong non-Christian soteriologies in Asia accounts for the lack of success of Christian missionaries in converting the continent to Christianity. There are only 3 per cent Christians in the whole of Asia, half of whom live in the Philippines. Sadly, in the process of becoming Christian, the Philippine Church "was forced to cut off its Asian roots". In international conferences, I am acutely aware of this. It is like the Philippines floated away from the Caribbean into the Pacific.

There is no doubt that the prevailing situation in Asia is a great challenge to the Church. But why especially to the Philippine Church? What is the underlying presupposition in this claim or mandate? This necessitates a discussion of the paradigm shifts in the understanding of *mission*.

3. PARADIGM SHIFTS IN CATHOLIC MISSIOLOGY

There have been serious efforts to rethink the concept of mission. There are the two SEDOS Conferences of 1981 and 1991. There is the classic book, *Transforming Mission* by David Bosch and its reader's companion *Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity* edited by Norman E. Thomas. For my purpose, it is enough to trace the paradigm shifts in Catholic mission as these apply to the Asian situation and the Philippine Church.

Before the Vatican Council, the understanding was that the Church's goal is to "save souls". Since the Church had THE TRUTH, it had the duty to convert all people to this truth, baptise them so that they will be saved. The goal of mission was thus to implant the Church among a particular people. A mission compound would be established with a church, a community of religious who will be engaged in preaching and works of mercy — schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc. These latter were considered pre-evangelisation work. Mission consisted primarily in the preaching of the Gospel. There was the *mission subject* who was the missionary coming from Christian countries and the *mission object* which were the people to whom the Gospel is preached. Success in mission was documented and reported in numbers of "souls baptised", marriage rectified, etc. This was the type of mission engaged in the context of colonialism in the 16th century as well as in the latter centuries.

The Second Vatican Council ushered in paradigm shifts in almost all aspects of theology and Church practice which will affect the concept of mission. *Ad Gentes*, n. 2, proclaimed the whole Church as missionary although territories were still designated where the Church was supposed to be implanted. Emphasis was given to the role of lay people and local Churches in the role of evangelisation. It proclaimed the restoration of unity among all Christians as one of its principal concerns (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, n.1) and declared its recognition of other religions and encouraged dialogue and collaboration with people of other faiths (*Nostra Aetate*, n. 2). Michael Amaladoss points out three insights in the Council documents which would have repercussions in the further development of the theology of mission, namely the universality of God's salvific plan, the social nature of the human person, and the limits of the Church.

After Vatican II, subsequent Church documents added other insights that contributed to the paradigm shift in mission. The 1971 Synod of Bishops in its document *Justice in the World* made the programmatic statement that "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation" (*Justice in the World*, Introduction). In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI emphasised the integral nature of salvation and therefore the many sided aspects of evangelisation which included not only personal conversion but social and cultural transformation (n. 17) and a message of liberation to countless peoples who struggle for a fuller humanity (ibid., n. 129).

In Latin America, the Conferences of the Bishops from Medellin to Puebla reshaped the whole concept of mission emphasising "the human efforts towards justice and peace, the need for adaptation in evangelisation and faith and the reform of the Church and its structures". We saw the emergence of the Theology of Liberation that would have world-wide repercussions both in Church and society.

The Asian Bishops' Meeting in Taipei, in 1974, began to see mission as a dialogue with the threefold realities of Asia: its rich cultures, its great religions and the reality of massive poverty. The agenda of mission would henceforth include in its evangelisation: inculturation, inter-religious dialogue and liberation. These were discussed thoroughly in the first Asian Missionary Congress held in Manila in December 1979. Its special emphasis was on the building up of the local Church as the focus of these threefold tasks. They proclaimed a new age in mission which they described thus:

"Mission" is no longer, and can no longer be, a one-way movement from the "older Churches" to the "younger Churches", from the Churches of the old Christendom to the Churches in the colonial lands. Now...every local Church is and cannot be but missionary. Every local Church is "sent by Christ and the Father to bring the Gospel to its surrounding milieu, and to bear it also into all the world. For every local Church this is a primary task. Hence we are moving beyond both the vocabulary and the idea of "sending Churches" and "receiving Churches", for as living communities of the one Church of Jesus Christ, every local Church must be a sending Church, and every local Church (because it is not on earth ever a total realisation of the Church) must also be a receiving Church. Every local Church is responsible for its missions, and

co-responsible for the mission of all its sister-Churches. Every local Church, according to its possibilities, must share whatever its gifts are, for the needs of other Churches, for mission throughout mankind, for the life of the world.

Group

We have a VISION – of local Churches whose expression of faith and worship springs from the particular cultural identity of their people, and the way God has spoken to them through their history.

In dialogue between these Churches, each is CHALLENGED – to see itself from new perspectives; to perceive what is universal and what is culturally conditioned.

In dialogue with other religions and with contemporary social and political realities, the Church, universal and local, becomes SALT and LIGHT for the whole world, and lay women and lay men are fully co-responsible, with their clergy, for mission and for ministry.

Boldly they proclaimed: "We have reached a decisive turning point in the mission history of the Third World. There is no return to the past, neither to the past mission theories, nor to past mission methods, nor to the past mission goals".

4. CHALLENGES TO THE PHILIPPINE CHURCH

Taking all the above discussions into account, I will now explain my discomfort with the theme assigned to me: *Asia: A Missionary Challenge to the*

Philippine Church. First of all, it sounds very triumphalistic to my ears. It is like saying, "Because the Philippines is the only Christian country in Asia, it has the *manifest destiny* (!) to convert Asia to Christianity". I am sure some Church people in the Philippines still sincerely believe in this. As for me I have the following reservations:

First of all, our own experience of being "mission objects" beginning from the Spanish friars was more negative than positive. Why would we want to inflict the same thing on other Asian peoples? We have criticised the Spanish *conquistador's* "Gold, Gospel, Glory", slogan and the United States' "White Man's Burden" in coming to our shores, so why should we arrogate to ourselves the same messianic mandate? Secondly, as Aloysius Pieris rightfully observed, Filipinos had to cut off their Asian roots in the process of becoming Christian. Indeed the Philippine Church is the most un-Asian Church in Asia. How then can we presume to transplant such an un-Asian form of Christianity in countries

With regard to inter-religious dialogue, this to me is the great challenge to the Philippine Church today. In becoming Christians, we have relinquished the heritage of the great Asian world religions.

who already feel that their Christian Churches are foreign bodies in their midst? It is true that we are the only Christian country in Asia. Does that fact set us apart as a model of how human beings should live together? Has our Christianity made a difference so that we can say it has made us more just, more peace-loving, more compassionate, more truly human and therefore more divine? If not, what have we to offer? I also no longer subscribe to the idea that we have the whole truth and that other religions have only partial truths and that therefore we should give them the chance to encounter this somehow superior truth. And even for those who believe this, with the emphasis on local Churches as the main locus of evangelisation, should not then the local Churches which exist in all countries of Asia have the mandate to do mission among their own people?

The actual situation is that most of the governments in Asia will not allow people to come in as missionaries to their country. Our own three sisters waited in vain for a year for a visa for Indonesia where our congregation wanted to establish a house in Kalimantan. We have just opened a house in China but we are supposed to be hospitable

administrators not missionaries. Of course many religious congregations have houses in different Asian countries and Filipinos get sent there. In fact they are also sent to Churches in Africa, Europe, the United States and other countries where they have branches. There are some local Churches that have also invited missionaries from the Philippine Missionary Society to serve in their areas. And of course there are the Filipino migrant workers who sometimes constitute the great majority of the worshipers in parish Churches in many Asian countries and who bring their local devotions such as Our Lady of Perpetual Help novenas and *El Shaddai mammoth* worship services along with them. These would definitely need the service of Filipino religious or lay missionaries, not only to help them struggle for their rights or attend to their physical, emotional and social needs but also to put their religious and spiritual practice on solid grounds in order that they can genuinely contribute to the life of the local Churches to which they have become a part. It is a definite challenge to the religious congregations in the Philippines to send more of their members to serve the Filipino migrant workers not only in Asia, but all over the world.

Another challenge to the Philippine Church is to see to it that those who do get the chance of going to Asian countries to work there, be truly well prepared and have the correct orientation in accordance with what had been seen as constitutive of mission in Asia today, namely inculturation, liberation, and inter-religious dialogue. For this, they should know first of all their own culture and steep themselves in the culture and master the language of the people they will live with. They should know what to do if they perceive something in the peoples' culture which seem oppressive. Should they just keep quiet? Should they themselves make a critique or should they help in empowering the people to undertake their own cultural critique? On this aspect of mission as countercultural, Fr Amaladoss writes:

...The Christian community is on mission when it tries to convert and transform culture so that it conforms more closely to the attitudes and values of the Gospel. For this the Gospel has not so much to be inculturated as countercultural. It is true that the Gospel cannot speak authentically a relevant word if it is not inculturated. But it must not get so inculturated as to lose its distance from culture which makes it possible for any religion to be prophetic and critical".

This brings us to the second aspect in the new paradigm of mission in Asia — liberation. In tracing the history of the Church in the Philippines, I made the effort to point out at each period the legitimising and the prophetic elements in the Church. If it is imperative that Christians involve

themselves in the struggle of the poor and the oppressed against injustice and to strive for full humanity, Filipino missionaries must be among the prophetic rather than the legitimising elements in the Church. Maybe this is what they can share with their Asian brothers and sisters — the tradition of resistance that has been present in the life and history of the Filipino people from the uprisings during the Spanish Regime, the Philippine revolution, the first quarter storm to the EDSA event. We have shown the role of Church people in all these. It should not be the "King-maker" or Christendom aspect that should be emulated but the involvement of the Church people in the struggles for justice and liberation.

With regard to inter-religious dialogue, this to me is the great challenge to the Philippine Church today. In becoming Christians, we have relinquished the heritage of the great Asian world religions. Although some individuals on their own have discovered and reclaimed this heritage for example in practicing Zen and Yoga, the Church has not officially taken any significant steps in this direction. This is what Filipinos who live in other Asian countries with this heritage can learn and integrate into their own spiritual life especially the valuable aspects of Asian contemplation. But even in this we should be careful not to practice what Aloysius Pieris calls "theological vandalism", in which a Christian guru "plucks Zen and Yoga from the religious stems which give them sap, and adorns Christian spirituality with sapless twigs". This he says is a form of Christian triumphalism which turns everything it touches to its own advantage, with no reverence for the wholeness of another's religious experience". In the same vein and offering a positive challenge, Fr Amaladoss writes:

To be really enriched by the religious experience of the other is to experience with the other. This togetherness requires solidarity and not mere physical nearness. For instance, it is easy to read the other religious scriptures and interpret them in the context of one's own tradition. It is not then a challenge, though it could be an enrichment. But it will be a challenge if we somehow enter into the other and see the world and God from the other's point of view. The same is true also about the rituals and methods of seeking spiritual experience, like Yoga and Zen for example. To Christianise them as a preparation for prayer is one thing; to experience them under a proper master and integrate or grow through them is another... This is a challenge that Christianity has not yet really taken up. The great religions of Asia offer an opportunity for such a deep dialogue.

This is a serious challenge to the Philippine

Church in spite of the fear of syncretism or religious relativism. It could bring to it the "Asian sense" it had lost.



To engage in authentic and fruitful dialogue, one must also have something of one's own to offer and to share. Can one then share not only one's intimacy with one's own Scripture but likewise show its impact on one's life and worship? If one proclaims oneself Christian, that is followers of Christ; if Christ is one's teacher, can one's *guru* show one that his spirit animates one's life? Can one mirror at least to some extent his radical openness to whatever God demanded of him, his preferential option for the poor, his inner freedom from the slavery of material things, from worship of idols, from the tyranny of law, and his thirst for contemplation in the midst of a life of committed service?

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

I have shared with you the history of the Philippine Church showing the two poles of legitimation and prophecy at each period. From there I gleaned what I consider the main pastoral concerns at present and in the next millennium. In the second part of the paper, I reflected on how the Asian situation poses a challenge to the Philippine Church. I concluded that Asia, with its realities of massive poverty, rich and varied cultures and deep religiosity, indeed poses a challenge to the Christian Church. But due to the new paradigm shift in mission theory and praxis, this challenge is not primarily to the Philippine Church but to all local Churches in Asia. This challenge does not consist in the triumphalistic, one-sided mandate to convert the Asian people to Christianity but it is more a challenge TO WITNESSING and COMMITMENT, to SHARING and DIALOGUE, to MUTUAL LEARNING and MUTUAL ENRICHMENT.

THE INDONESIAN MISSIONARY CHURCH

HOPES AND PROBLEMS

M. Sastrapratedja, SJ

I

The Report of the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia to the Holy See on the occasion of the *ad limina* visit in 1989 mentioned that "while remaining inside the faith communion of Christ's universal Church, the 'Church in Indonesia' is in the process of becoming ever more fully the 'Indonesian Church'. This process of inculturation towards living and expressing Christian faith ever more authentically ... should affect all aspects of the life and mission of the Church: its 'internal life as well as its mission in society'. This is the reason for heading this paper "The Indonesian Missionary Church" instead of "A Missionary Church in Indonesia".

Since the Second Vatican Council the Church in Indonesia has been trying to build up its identity, to

You have to be aware of the implications of becoming a Christian. Perhaps you will not be able to enroll yourselves in State Universities; you will find difficulty in getting high positions in the Government bureaucracy; it is not easy to conduct a mixed marriage; perhaps you will even encounter problems getting a job.

define its mission and to identify the challenges of an ever changing situation. These efforts are manifested in various Church documents issued by the Indonesia Bishops' Conference and individual Dioceses in Indonesia, as well as in many theological reflections. From these we can draw a common view of the Church in Indonesia which constitutes a general vision of the Church. Vision is our whole outlook which enables us to perceive reality which is too complex to comprehend. A vision, then, is like a map that guides us through an array of bewildering complexities. Like a map vision does

not provide us with a complete and detailed picture. It has, therefore, to leave out many details in order to enable us to focus on a few key paths to our goals. As Abraham Maslow says, "the basic question is, what vision do you aspire to?" This statement can also be applied to the Indonesian Church. Vision is important to set the agenda for both our reflection and action. Here are some points about the vision of the Indonesian Church to be dealt with briefly. The Indonesia Church is in a state of transition; it is a becoming Church. Therefore, the most striking feature of the Church in Indonesia is its dynamism. There have been shifts of emphasis in many aspects of the life of the Church:

- a shift from a Church as an institution to a Church as a community of people giving priority to communion and communication, to proclaiming and witnessing to salvation brought about by Jesus Christ,
- a shift from orthodoxy to orthopraxis; faith is more an authentic deed than an assent to a doctrine;
- a shift from legalism to the dictate of conscience as a sign of Christian moral maturity;
- a shift from the directive role of the hierarchy to the common responsibility of both the hierarchy and the laity; the role of the hierarchy is to foster communion and to facilitate communication among the faithful.
- a shift from an "evangelised" Church to an "evangelising" Church; undoubtedly the Church needs to be "evangelised" because the people of God must participate more fully in the mystery of Christ proclaimed in the Gospel, but now the Indonesian Church is more aware of its mission to proclaim the Gospel in all areas of life even outside Indonesia;
- a shift from a dependent Church to a self-reliant Church in matters of pastoral ministry, material needs and personnel;

One of the characteristics of modern society is pluralism. Pluralism implies possibilities of choices and a relativising tendency. Today man is conscious that he is not subjected to fate. His life will be determined by his choices and independent decisions. To be a Christian today is a choice also, a choice among many possibilities offered by modern society. Faith is becoming much more a choice than a legacy. In a society where Christians are a minority, faith as a choice is felt more. You have to be aware of the implications of becoming a Christian. Perhaps you will not be able to enroll yourselves in State Universities; you will find difficulty in getting high positions in the Government bureaucracy; it is not easy to conduct a mixed marriage; perhaps you will even encounter problems getting a job.

This is something contradictory. On the one hand modern society offers freedom of choice, on the other, in a society where the majority are exerting their influence on all spheres of life, freedom is becoming more restricted. Adherence to a religion becomes a factor in the allocation of roles in society. Moreover, when faith becomes a matter of personal choice, "massive conversion" and "massive Churches" will grow less in number and small Christian groups will resume a more prominent role. The concept of the "basic Christian community" will become important.

Inculturation is an effort to express and reinforce faith in the way that is suited to the existing symbols and traditions of society. The symbols must be understood and must confer meaning to the people of the present age. Terms like "Faith", "Jesus Christ", "Salvation", "Eternal Life", "Grace" must be expressed through symbols and be continually interpreted. In this way they will not only have meaning but also manage to solve the problems Christians face in the contemporary world.

The preferential option for the poor is the witness of the Gospel inspired Church. The Church will become credible only through its commitment to promote justice in Indonesian society. The understanding of justice must surpass the traditional notion of justice as "*suum cuique*" or "to each his own". Through "negative dialectic" (Adorno) we can see a larger scope of justice. Through an analysis of negative situations we will come to a better understanding of justice. Justice can be understood as the realisation of basic human needs. Violence in its various forms can be seen as the negation of basic human needs. We can identify three clusters of basic human needs.

- (a) **Subsistence.** It is the need of every human being to maintain his existence and his individuality both at the physical level and psychical level. The negation of subsistence

needs is manifested in extermination (direct violence) and in the misery or poverty (structural) violence.

- (b) **Growth.** It is the need of every human being to unfold his potentiality. We can distinguish two kinds of growth: primary growth which refers to the basic psycho-physical growth in the first years of human life, and maturity growth which is a continuous psychic growth till the end of life. The denial of this fundamental need is repression.

Now the Indonesian Church is more aware of its mission to proclaim the Gospel in all areas of life even outside Indonesia.

- (c) **Transcendence.** This need can be defined as the force that moves the individual to go beyond his individuality and unite with other natural or meta-empirical entities. The need of transcendence includes also the need to give meaning to life. The denial of this is an alienation.

The relation between human needs and various forms of violence are shown in the following chart:

<u>Fundamental needs</u>	<u>Structural violence</u>	<u>Main areas</u>
SURVIVAL Necessary means to survive	POVERTY MISERY	ECONOMIC
GROWTH physical, moral, intellectual	REPRESSION	POLITICAL
TRANSCENDENCE Community, identity, meaning	ALIENATION	CULTURAL

These are areas with which the Church should show its concern and in which it should proclaim the salvation brought by Jesus Christ.

II

The development of Indonesian society is the second factor to consider in order to be able to

determine the action to be taken by the Church. I will mention several issues which challenge the Church today:

1. Economic Development and Its Problems

With regard to the point, demographic growth poses a particular problem. At the present time Indonesian population totals 180.4 million and in the year 2000 it will reach 210.3 million in number. Some positive achievements with regard to the Indonesian demography are worthy of our attention: the growth of the population can be stemmed; there will be a decrease in the birth rate, that is from 2.1 per cent in 1985 to 1.4 per cent in 2000-2005. Moreover, there is a remarkable improvement in education and health facilities and also an obvious increase in the participation of women labour forces; the people under 29 years of age constitute the dominant segment of the population. The problem that comes up is the uneven distribution of the population. The census conducted in 1990 pointed out that the size of the labour force increased from

39.2 million in 1971 to 72.0 million in 1990. The growth of the population has a close connection with urbanisation. Experts in the field have predicted that the island of Java will become a city island with Jabotabek as its mega city; cities will have problems of their own. Indonesia is entering into an industrial stage of development. Industrialisation not only means the use of more machines but it also means a complex process which is to involve the replacement of human energy with that of machines and electronics. A socio-cultural change is required to support the process of industrialisation (work ethics, views of life, skills, knowledge, etc). The growth of industry has shifted from unskilled labour intensive industry to natural resources and technology intensive industry. Therefore, it is often said that the Second Long-Term National Development Plan has given emphasis to the development of human resources. The issue that confronts the Indonesian people is how to get rid of poverty. The data gathered by Prof. Mubyarto have shown the patterns of poverty distribution across the country in 1987 as follows.

Region	Population (millions)	Per cent
Java	23.2	74.0
Sumatra	3.0	10.0
Borneo	0.3	1.0
Celebes	2.1	7.0
Eastern Indonesia	2.4	8.0

(Prof. Mubyarto, "Strategy of the development of Indonesian Economy", A Paper presented at the seminar for intellectuals and ABRI (Indonesian Armed Forces), Semarang, 23 January 1991).

2. Social and Political Development

The social and political development of Indonesia is closely related with the development of the economy. The growth of democracy also depends on the enforcement of the principles of equality and distribution in the field of economy. There will be, at least, three political issues encountered by the Indonesian people in the future: national integrity, democratisation and the interpretation of Pancasila.

The formation of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945 called for the change from separate ethnic entities to a wider entity, namely the nation State. The identity which rested upon ethnicity, religion or other elements of culture shifted into the one that was based on nationalism. Very often the process of nation building is believed to have come to an end. I think the process of this national integrity should be developed and extended. The tendencies for the

Group

We have been challenged, provoked and evoked by the presentations and discussion at this conference. In particular we recall the resilience of the human spirit in the Philippines, the importance of the laity living out their charism in Indonesia, and the challenge of true incarnation in the Pacific region.

We hope and pray that those on mission in the Philippines, Indonesia and the Pacific will support and work in solidarity with all who suffer or do not enjoy full human rights in the regions, and that those on mission will be able to serve the Churches and religions there, so as to enable them to re-discover God's revelation in their past, and discern God's Word for US today.

growth of primordialism (ethnicity, religion, region) can lead to disintegration and bring destruction to the unity.

In the future democracy will be an inevitable demand. The formation of the strong and modern State must go hand in hand with that of strong civil society which can exert social control and participate in the making of political decisions.

Pancasila contains principles that must serve as the guide-lines for the regulation of the political life in Indonesia. However, the question is how to interpret it? How can it function as a point of reference for political discourses?

3. Cultural Development of Indonesia

The problem facing the Indonesian country at the end of the year 2000 will be how to maintain the ability to generate new cultural syntheses, for globalisation has brought into contact cultures of all nations throughout the world including Indonesia. The prospects of Indonesian culture in the years to come will be determined not only by international influences, especially science and technology, but also by the capability of the Indonesia people to make the most of their cultural assets. Similarly, the characteristics of religions in Indonesia will be coloured by to what extent local cultures, especially the Javanese culture, can survive. Islam in Indonesia will have its own features as long as the influence of the Javanese culture still persists. The same holds true for Christianity in Indonesia.

Other elements of culture which merit being studied include:

- the change in the cosmology that has resulted from the present development of science and technology;
- the process of modernisation (recognition of the function of reason, future orientation, a good sense of timing, distinction between the individual sphere and the public one) and how religions respond to it;

The problem facing the Indonesian country at the end of the year 2000 will be how to maintain the ability to generate new cultural syntheses, for globalisation has brought into contact cultures of all nations throughout the world including Indonesia.

- cultural gaps (education, information, communication) between the haves and the have-nots;
- adaptive capacity of the Indonesian people in the face of industrialisation (alienation, anonymity, value crisis);
- tendencies of religious fundamentalism;

The Church cannot ignore the issues above. The problem, however, is how far the Church can engage itself in "the national discourse" on how to resolve all the issues confronting the nation.



THE INDONESIAN CHURCH

THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM

M. Sastrapratedja, SJ

The Global Dimension of Islam

The Iranian Revolution, the Salman Rushdie affair, the Gulf war, the recent events in Bosnia, the Muslim Brotherhoods of Egypt, the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, the *Jamaat-i-Islami* in Pakistan, the Islamic radicalism in Sudan, are examples showing the global influence of Islam today. In what sense is Islam a global phenomenon? First of all what is happening in the Islamic world cannot be

Muslims are facing two problems. First, how should the Islamic faith be put into practice in a State where Islam is not an official State religion? In other words, what is the place of Islam in the non-Islamic State? Secondly, how should Muslims live in a multicultural context?

seen as affecting only the relationship of Christianity and Islam, or the West and the Muslim World but it concerns the global community. Secondly, the total number of Muslims today reaches about one billion people living in about 50 countries. Thirdly, the transformation of the global economy has forced people to move around the world in search of work. Muslims are not an exception and many of them become part of the Western World. Fourthly, recent events in Bosnia have evoked Muslims' consciousness as a community which surpasses the boundaries of the nation States. Hence Islam takes part in the process of globalisation and is affected by it.

In studying Islam in Indonesia, therefore, we have to put Islam in a larger context. It will be unfair to see Islam only from the perspective of the interest of the Catholic Church. Furthermore we have to avoid a monolithic view of Islam. Christians tend to see Islam as a

threat or challenge to Christianity. They overlook the fact that Muslims themselves are facing problems and they have to respond to and define their position in an ever changing world.

Although Muslims constitute the majority of the Indonesian population, (in the 1990 census, 87 per cent of 180.000.000 Indonesians said they were Muslim), however, Indonesia is not an Islamic State. In this case Muslims are facing two problems. First, how should the Islamic faith be put into practice in a State where Islam is not an official State religion? In other words, what is the place of Islam in the non-Islamic State? Secondly, how should Muslims live in a multicultural context? In the words of Nurcholis Madjid, a prominent Muslim scholar, "The problem of Islam vis-à-vis pluralism is, therefore, the problem of how the Muslims adapt themselves to the modern age. And this, in its turn, involves the problems of how they see and assess the problem of change and of the necessity of bringing the universal and normative Islam into a dialogue with the temporal and special realities".

The Adaptive Ability of Islam

When Islam arrived in Indonesia about seven hundred years ago, there existed already plurality of religions, namely, ethnic religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. In the course of its subsequent history Islam was syncretised with cultural and religious traditions existing in Indonesia, as Manning Nash describes:

"In Indonesia, then, Islam was, and has remained, a force for cultural diversification rather than homogenisation: the religion took on different forms in different segments of Indonesian society and remains marked by a peculiarly Indonesian syncretism".

For a religion like Islam which has a claim to universality its strong adaptive attitude is exceptional. Islam sometimes is considered as an uncompromising religion. Any contact with concrete local culture and society is considered as syncretism. Thus, the specific feature of Indonesian Islam is its capacity to adapt itself to the existing cultural and religious complexity.

Clifford Geertz in his *Religion of Java*, mentions that there are three variants of Islam in Indonesia, particularly in Java: *abangan*, *santri* and *priyayi*. All of them are Muslim but having different degrees of intensity in observing Islam.

The *abangan* belief is rooted in the indigenous religious tradition. Their attitude is tolerant and indifferent to doctrine. They tend to relativise their own religious tradition. The *santri*, on the contrary, are concerned with "Islamic doctrine, and most especially the moral and social interpretation of it". They defend Islam as "a superior ethical code for modern man, as a workable social doctrine for modern society, and as a fertile source of values for modern culture". In contrast to the relativising tendency of the *abangan* the *santri* emphasise the necessity of unreserved belief and faith in the absolute truth of Islam.

The *priyayi* were an aristocratic élite of the old Javanese Kingdoms. Their world view was influenced by Hindu mysticism. "The three major foci of *priyayi* 'religious' life are etiquette, art and mystical practice ... Etiquette, the polishing of interpersonal behaviour into a smooth decorum, lends to everyday behaviour a spiritualised formality; art, a dual discipline of mind and body, provides a revelation of inner significance in outward gesture; and mystic practice, the intensive regulation of the life of thought and feeling, organises for an attack upon ultimate enlightenment".

Many scholars disagree with Geertz' scheme of Islam in Indonesia. Nurcholis Madjid after quoting Marshal Hodgson's *The Venture of Islam*, and Robert Hefner's *Hindu Javanese, Tengger Tradition and Islam*, which criticise Geertz, came to the conclusion that "Islam indeed works as the basic layers of Indonesian culture". However, in my opinion, the arguments against Geertz are not very convincing. Geertz in fact did not want to say that Islam is observed by just a little fraction of the Indonesian population, i.e. the *santri*. He

intended to show how the Indonesian, in this case the Javanese, in encountering various cultures coming to Indonesia, tried to negotiate their identity. The results of the negotiation varied according to their different socio-cultural settings.

The specific feature of Islam in Indonesia became again the focus of Geertz' study in his work *Islam Observed*, where he compared Islam in Indonesia and in Morocco. The difference between these two types of Islam can be described as follows.

On the Indonesian side:

inwardness, imperturbability,
patience, poise,
sensibility, aestheticism,
elitism,
self-effacement,
radical dissolution of individuality

Indonesian Civilisation is built on diligence:

the settled, industrious rather inward plowman nursing his terrace, placating his neighbours and feeding his superiors

Indonesian Islam is:

adaptive, absorbent,
pragmatic, gradualistic, eclectic and syncretistic.
Fabian spirit,
aiming at comprehensiveness
reflective,
multifarious.
Elitist, esoteric, aesthetic
quietism, ceremonialism,
hierarchism.

Based on the local court and the theatre State

as an image of the divine and a paradigm for social order

On the Moroccan side:

Activism,
ferver, impetuosity,
nerve, toughness, moralism,
populism,
self-assertion,
radical intensification of individuality

Moroccan Civilisation is built on nerve:

the restless, aggressive, extroverted sheikh husbanding resources, cultivating his reputation and awaiting his opportunity

Moroccan Islam is:

uncompromising rigorism,
 an active attempt to impress a seamless
 orthodoxy;
 Utopian spirit,
 aiming at purity,
 activist, rigorous, dogmatic,
 anthropolatrous
 Absolute personal loyalty,
 ecstatic moral intensity.

Based on mosque and market:

disruptive and revolutionary unassimilable and
 aggressive.

J.D. Legge remarks that there was a twofold process of acculturation. "In much the same way as Hindu art had been subjected to a selective process in which the choice of some features, and the rejection of others, has led to a gradual modification of its character, so Islamic teaching, in seeking to change existing

Indonesian people are known as a nation to have a high ability of synthesis. In fact inter-religious dialogues are not new to Indonesian people. Inter-religious dialogue has been part of Indonesia's whole history. We can say that the history of religions is the history of inter-religious dialogues.

belief and practice, found itself able — and was indeed compelled — in some measure to base itself upon those existing forms". Thus in the course of history, Islam incorporated elements from ethnic religions and other world religions while at the same time the ethnic religions and other world religions assimilated elements from Islam.

Islamic reform

The introduction of Muhammad Abduh's Reformist Movement to Indonesia at the beginning of the twentieth century brought about changes in Islam. It called for the purification of Islam from religious elements contrary to Islam.

"The arrival of reformist Islam had another effect: not only did it illuminate differences between *santri* and *abangan*, it also deepened cleavages within the *santri* community itself".

Furthermore, the Reformist Movement sought an accommodation between Islamic teaching and the modern world. Al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh maintained that authentic modern civilisation does not contradict Islam. But how this encounter between Islam and modern society should be, is not clear in Abduh's thought. Some of his followers stressed the necessity of separation between these two realities. Others carried further the idea of the compatibility of Islam with modern science by identifying certain traditional concepts of Islamic thought with the dominant ideas of modern Europe. *Sura*, for example, is identified with parliamentary democracy, *ijma* with public opinion. Thus they tried to justify modern civilisation by referring to some passages in the Koran. They claimed that whatever is good in the modern world is already included in Islam and is not in conflict with it. Such a way of reasoning is still dominant among Muslims today.

Modern Islamic reform is not just a response to the challenge of the West but it is rooted in the tradition of Islam itself.

"Islam possesses a rich, long tradition of Islamic revival (*tajdid*) and reform (*islah*). Down through the ages, individuals (theologians, legal scholars, sufi masters, and charismatic preachers) and organisations undertook the renewal of the community in times of weakness and decline, responding to the apparent gap between the Islamic ideal and the realities of Muslim life. As with all things, a return to Islam — that is, to the fundamentals: the Koran, the life of the Prophet, and the early Islamic community — offered the model for Islamic reform".

The modernist movement took shape in various social, political and cultural organisations.

At the present moment there are three important Islamic social organisations. The first is *Mubammadiyah*, which was founded in 1912 by modernist *santri*. The aim of *Muhammadiyah* is to reform Islamic thought through education. Perhaps the largest number of private educational institutions from Kindergarten to University are owned by *Muhammadiyah*.

The second Islamic organisation, the biggest one in terms of its members, is *Nabdlatul Ulama* (NU), meaning "The Revival of Religious Scholars". It was founded in 1926. In 1990, the NU claimed a membership of some thirty million, while the membership of *Muhammadiyah* is smaller, at about fifteen million. The basis of *Muhammadiyah* is intellectual groups and schools spread all over Indonesia. *Nahdlatul Ulama* is the rural-based *Ulama* (religious teachers) organisation and most of

the *Ulama* have their own basis in the *pesantren* (religious schools).

In December 1990, with President Suharto's approval, a group of Muslim Intellectuals founded *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* (Organisation of Indonesia Muslim Intellectuals or ICMI). ICMI is headed by Minister for Research and Technology B.J. Habibie. ICMI has its own newspaper *Republika* and its own think-tank, the Centre for Information and Development Studies.

The membership of ICMI includes, cabinet ministers, Golkar leaders, University professors, businessmen, Muslim figures and thinkers. Although ICMI claims that it is not a political organisation and its main objective is to make a real contribution to the ever — increasing quality of life of the whole Indonesian population, this new organisation has become a vehicle for Indonesian Muslims to increase the political role of Islam. People say that the membership of ICMI is a condition to occupy important positions, such as cabinet ministers, University Rectors and some other important Government bureaucrats.

The strongest criticism of ICMI came from Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of *Nahdlatul Ulama*. According to Abdurrahman Wahid ICMI develops what he calls "sectarianism". In this period of history, struggles to win democracy and social justice should become a priority leaving aside the interests of a particular group including Muslims. Islam should not become ideology and should not be seen as the only basis for democracy, law and economic justice. Islam has to be "a basis of inspiration" for national planning of a democratic society.

From an "ideological" perspective we can distinguish three groups of Muslims: the first group consists of those who inspired by modernist ideas emphasise the role of Islam as ideology. Islam is regarded as a comprehensive and total way of life providing answers to all questions of life. Islam is the solution to the problems of modernisation. They are aware that it is impossible to establish an Islamic State. Any effort to change the State ideology, Pancasila, will be suppressed by the Government. As a majority they claim the right to apply *Sharia*, to form *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic Community). They demand specific governmental regulations for Muslims. Moreover since Muslims constitute the majority of the population there should be proportional distribution in the allocation of political roles, national assets, other important positions and opportunities.

The second group emphasises Islam as a moral force. This group is represented by Abdurrahman Wahid who "believes that minorities give life to a

nation and we have to protect them. Islam should be implemented as social ethics and mores but not as a political force. We have to be able to accept the existence of other cultural strengths. The first group emphasises differences between Islam and the others, when we prefer to emphasise similarities".

The third is the fundamentalist group. Manning Nash describes some features of fundamentalism in South East Asia as follows:

1. Fundamentalist groups base their arguments on a literalist reading of scripture.
2. An idealised past, a golden age of purity, is reconstructed from this literalist reading of the Koran and the *Sunna* and presented as attainable in the future.
3. Though the past serves as a model, what fundamentalism seeks is not simply to turn back the clock but to create an ideal society based on Islamic tenets in the context of contemporary reality.

Thus in the course of history, Islam incorporated elements from ethnic religions and other world religions while at the same time the ethnic religions and other world religions assimilated elements from Islam.

4. Fundamentalists organise themselves into a network or cadre movement with a leader and a cell-like structure.
5. The group tends to be actively opposed to the modern West, with hedonism and materialism.
6. The group combines anti-modernism with defence on ethnic identity. It seeks to see rapid change toward greater social and cultural equality for the oppressed ethnic group.
7. The continued social existence of the fundamentalist movement depends on a charismatic leader.
8. Finally, fundamentalism carries with it an inherent theodicy by which everything that is wrong — that produces unjust suffering — can be meaningfully explained as having come about because of departure from the true faith.

Group

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We thank God for the warmth of friendship experienced here.

We thank God for the new horizons we have opened up for each other.

We thank God for the experience of diversity and universality in this Pentecost community.

In these last days we have at times been disturbed, we have had a mirror held up in front of us, in which we have seen our sinfulness personal and corporate; our lack of respect for God's gift and presence in different cultures and other faiths.

We have seen too that we have not taken enough RISKS to question our own faith, our institutions and cultural assumptions.

We recognise our need for God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of the people we have hurt - we want to learn to take off our shoes in respect and humility because the ground on which the other stands is holy.

We have shared dreams of a Church which is a real community of equals, where every person and every group and culture is valued. We want to live out that dream; to challenge those practices and structures which harm that communion.

We want to continue our reflection on new models of mission in our own congregations and with lay people and new movements in the Church.

And lastly, we pray in thanksgiving for all those who have made these days so good. The staff and the organisers of SEDOS, our speakers and all the people of this house who have worked so hard to ensure our comfort.

Fundamentalist groups in the full sense hardly exist in Indonesia. However, tendencies towards fundamentalism at least in the ways of thinking can be identified.

The Politics of "Agama"

The Indonesian word *Agama* translates roughly as the English word "religion". The politics of religion was practiced by the colonial Dutch fearing the power of Islam to transcend ethnic divisions and to inspire resistance. The Dutch tried to stem the spread of Islam where they could. Christian missionaries were not allowed in Muslim areas to prevent the reaction of local Muslim leaders. The Dutch Government permitted missionaries in non-Muslim areas and created Christian enclaves. Islam was a symbol of anti-colonialism.

After independence, the politics of religion is based on Pancasila as stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution.

Furthermore, to form a Government of Indonesia to protect the whole Indonesian Nation and the entire Indonesian homeland and to advance general welfare, to stimulate the nation, and to participate in the implementation of world order founded on freedom, abiding peace and social justice, the Independence of the Indonesian Nation shall be drawn up in a Constitution, formed in the structure of a Republic of Indonesia with sovereignty vested in the people, based upon: Belief in the One Supreme God, a just and civilised humanity, the unity of Indonesia, and a democracy guided by the inner wisdom of consultation-representation, as well as realising social justice for all Indonesia people.

The article 29 guarantees religious freedom.

- (1) "The State shall be based upon Belief in God the Almighty".
- (2) "The State shall guarantee the freedom of every inhabitant to adhere to his own religion and make observance in accordance with such religion and belief".

The Government's stance on religion as manifested in the First Principle of Pancasila was a compromise between the proponents of a Muslim State and those who opposed this idea. South East Asian scholar, Anthony John says, that:

"Although Indonesia should not be an Islamic State, it should not be a secular one

either. Rather, Indonesia, should have a religious state philosophy based on belief in God through which the ideals of every religious denomination could be realised".

This compromise entails making Indonesia an expressly religious nation without making any particular religion the religion of State. Five religions are officially recognised by the Government: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism.

"The religious Charter of Indonesia is a cultural model for inclusiveness; in a profound way, however, its application is exclusive. The policy covers only world religions presumed to be monotheistic, to possess a written scripture, and to transcend ethnic boundaries".

There have been debates about the term "*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*". There are various translations of its: "The One and Only God", "The Absolute Lordship", "All-embracing God". The preference of "*Tuhan*" (Lord) instead of "*Allah*" (God) is also a point of discussion. Some see the First Principle is just a political principle which legally recognise religious freedom, while others tend to emphasise that the First Principle entails the obligation of each citizen to embrace a religion. In any way, problems related to religions and the relationship between religions in Indonesia must be seen in the context of Pancasila and the interpretation of Pancasila, upon which the Government religious policy is based.

The Prospects of inter-religious dialogues

1. Our rapid observation about Islam in Indonesia shows that Islam in Indonesia has the capacity to adapt itself to different cultural and religious traditions. Other religions in Indonesia including Christianity have the same capacity. The "plasticity" of religions in Indonesia enables the enhancement of inter-religious dialogues. The problem is how to maintain this capacity? Indonesian people are known as a nation to have a high ability of synthesis. In fact inter-religious dialogues are not new to Indonesian people. Inter-religious dialogue has been part of Indonesia's whole history. We can say that the history of religions is the history of inter-religious dialogues. Dialogue presupposes a mutual interpretation, openness and awareness of the relativity of its position. A consciousness of the relativity of religious expression is the implication of recognition of pluralism. It prevents religion from absolutising itself and excludes any fundamen-

It seemed important to us:

1. *The Pacific is almost unknown in Europe. It is an important area, especially for the Church.*

What can we do to ensure that this voice is heard and received as a transforming contribution?

2. *'The future of the Church will be in Asia, the main actors will be Asian' but how does Christianity achieve a truly Asian face and incarnation?*

3. *Asia does not need missionaries in order to develop, but it does need Christianity, together with the contribution of other great spiritual traditions to bring Gospel values to that development, to humanise it. That is the essential task of Christian mission and is to be done in reverent dialogue with the deep faith and spirituality of the people.*

4. *In the past we have seen Christianity as something which replaces everything else - now we see it more as yeast and salt - enhancing flavour, transforming the deep spirituality already present.*

5. *We have asked ourselves 'what is it that Christianity brings which is specific?' We believe that it is the universality of love beyond the boundaries of family, tribe and nation. As missionary Christians we have to be signs of universal love.*

We asked ourselves, 'who has the right to criticise culture?'

We think that the primary right belongs to the people of that culture - but that the role of the 'outsider' is also important, to hold up a mirror, to ask questions reverently. We all need the help of others to relativise our cultural absolutes. We see this applying everywhere but especially perhaps, in countries where Christianity has been long established.

talism. The capacity for adaptation is the capacity for dialogue.

2. Today Islam is exposed to the challenges of modernity both in its cultural as well as political aspects. Christianity carries with it the legacy of modernity from the West. Therefore, it is better equipped to deal with modernity and its problems. This legacy brings about not only intellectual responsibility but also moral and spiritual responsibility. This historical position implies that the Church in Indonesia must be able to make a substantial contribution in coping with the problem of modernity. A dialogue of Christianity with Islam should work out a viable way of modernity which the Indonesian people cannot avoid. Christians and Muslims must elaborate modernity so that it is:

The Church in Indonesia must be able to make a substantial contribution in coping with the problem of modernity. A dialogue of Christianity with Islam should work out a viable way of modernity which the Indonesian people cannot avoid.

"To be affirmed in its humane content, to be denied in its inhuman limits, and to be transcended in a new, differentiated, pluralistic and holistic synthesis".

3. A dialogue between Christianity and Islam is to aim at searching together for the meaning and value of humanity and human dignity. This means, among other things, that dialogue has to develop an openness towards a humanistic ethic that gives priority to the salvation of humanity. This is primarily important in a society like Indonesia in which there is a need to have a basis for common understanding and responsibility.

Professor Bassam Tibi from the University of Gottingen in a Seminar conducted recently in Jakarta suggested building up a common ground for a dialogue between Islam and the West. He raises four points to discuss:

- 1) Among the seven leading civilisations in our current world only Islam and the West have universal outlooks and therefore do clash with one another. How can their universalism be limited to a point of making them live together peacefully?

- 2) In the medieval period Islamic civilisation was able to accommodate a major source of Western civilisation, i.e., Hellenism and develop out of it one segment of its own legacy. Moreover, it was the Islamic civilisation itself which passed Hellenism to Europe at the eve of the Renaissance and thus made it possible for Europe to change its orientation from Rome to Athens, i.e., from the authority of the Pope to the authority of human reason as taught by Aristotle. By then Muslims and Europeans shared the enthusiasm for the primacy of *Aql* — reason and the high regard for Aristotelian rationalism. Can this legacy be revived for a new encounter between the West and Islam? I believe human rights do provide an opening for this new encounter.

- 3) For a fruitful dialogue it is imperative to determine those issue areas that split, and those others that unite. Political religion, i.e., fundamentalism on the side of the Muslims, and cultural and political hegemony on the side of the West do separate both civilisations. On the contrary, cultural borrowing and dialogue on the grounds of rationality and international morality do unite rival civilisations.

- 4) The most pivotal issue in this respect revolves around the idea of International morality based on minimal consensus shared by all civilisations. In my view, the idea of human rights and the ethics related to it lie at the hub of this morality.

4. The Church exists not for its own sake but for the salvation of all people. It is, therefore, the primary concern of the Church to serve people and to defend their human dignity regardless of their religion. The struggle to eradicate poverty and injustice which still prevails in Indonesia should become the basis of inter-religious dialogue.

5. In fostering a genuine inter-religious dialogue the Church should put more emphasis on the elements of religiosity rather than on the institutional elements of religion. Religiosity is concerned with our deep attitudes derived from our faith: openness, generosity, humility and hope.

6. Theology of religion is a necessity for any inter-religious dialogue. Both Muslim and Christian theologians in Indonesia have developed their theology of religion.

7. Finally, dialogue can be conducted in various ways and at different levels.

THE TRANSFORMING ROLE OF THE CHURCH

PAST AND FUTURE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PRESENT

Ennio Mantovani, SVD

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to make people aware of the situation of the Church in Papua New Guinea and of the issues which confront it. The purpose is not to give solutions or argue alternatives, but simply to present the issues, highlighting the theological and anthropological components of them. Obviously, I do argue for something: I argue that the issues must be taken seriously.

I decided to treat the topic which was given to me — the transforming role of the Church — by looking at what the Church has done in the past and at what it needs to do in the future. I shall try to show the link between the past achievements and the future tasks.

I shall speak from the standpoint of the present with the advantage of hindsight and of better tools of analysis. Finally, I speak as somebody who for over thirty years was part of that past and hopes to be part of the future as well.

2. THE TRANSFORMING ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE PAST

i. The Successes

The first Roman Catholic missionaries — the Sacred Heart Missionaries — came to New Britain in 1882, and to the South coast of the mainland — Papua — in 1884. The Divine Word Missionaries or SVD went to the North coast of what is now Papua New Guinea in 1896. The interior of Papua New Guinea was only discovered in 1933, by Fr Schäfer, SVD., who led the missionaries into the Simbu and began the missionary work in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.

Today, a century later we have a nation which, in its Constitution, calls itself Christian. The people

who on the eve of Independence in 1975, inspired by Gospel values, wrote that beautiful Constitution, are an example of the Christian *élite* of Papua New Guinea. There is a growing local clergy and a flourishing religious life. There is a local Church with eighteen dioceses divided into four regions, each headed by an Archbishop. Where sixty years ago Alphonse Schäfer began the work of evangelisation, today we find a Diocese where already half the clergy is local with a good number of young men in the major seminary. In Papua New Guinea there is an active laity whose slogan is 'we are the Church'. There is a proud Church, suffering all the usual problems, but very much alive and active.

Ecumenically, the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea was one of the first in the world to join the National Council of Churches. In its service for the Kingdom of God the Roman Catholic Church works together with the other Churches who are willing to cooperate, enhancing in this way the quality of service offered to the people. Education, medical services, and Word Publishing, are examples of this cooperation. There is also an ecumenical body for the religious programmes on national television. Lately the Churches were able to get a Religious Studies Department at the National University main campus in Port Moresby and on the Goroka Campus where the Faculty of Education is located. At Goroka, for instance, all future high school teachers will have access to a three year programme in religious studies which allows them to earn a Bachelor degree in Education with a Major in Religious Studies. This way the Church influences the religious attitudes of the future high school educators of the whole of Papua New Guinea. The Melanesian Institute, which is a misanthropological research centre, is also ecumenical.

This is the success of the past and the foundation for the future. We missionaries are proud of what has been achieved through the grace of God. All the

limitations we shall discover cannot turn this success into failure. We established a strong local Church which bids well for the future. If I am critical, it is not because we missionaries were failures. It is the classical case of the wisdom of hindsight. The reason for my criticism is to make sure that the future will be as great a success as the past.

ii. The Other Side of Success

We saw the tremendous results of the missionary effort in Papua New Guinea. They are like the two faces of a medal. Let us turn the medal over and see the reverse.

ii.a) Foreign Initiative

In the past, till about thirty years ago, there was no Church but a mission. There were no Bishops but Apostolic Vicars. They were representing — *vicarii* — the Pope who had sent them.

Today, a century later we have a nation which, in its Constitution, calls itself Christian. The people who on the eve of Independence in 1975, inspired by Gospel values, wrote that beautiful Constitution, are an example of the Christian élite of Papua New Guinea.

The missionaries, as a rule, were members of missionary societies, which had received from the Pope the responsibility for a certain area and were supposed to convert the people and establish a Church there.

So if we speak of the role of the Church in the past, we must be aware that till the end of the fifties there was no Church but missions. This is more than just pedantic legalism. It means that, first, the authority, the initiative, the planning was not local, but foreign. What grew was not shaped by local people or by the spirit of their cultures, but was erected by foreign authority which knew best how things should be. Secondly, it means also that the people got used to having things done for them from outside. If something was needed one asked for it and it would come — at least in theory. Initiative was not expected or even less demanded. To be honest, everything which was done was, usually, so much bigger and more complicated than what they were used to, that often the local people could not use their own initiative, even if they wanted. The Christians were helped into dependency.

Today there is a local Church. The mission societies lost their rights over specific territories and now work under the authority of the local Bishops. However, decades of benevolent ecclesial colonialism are not forgotten overnight.

ii.b) Material Infrastructures

The missionaries to achieve their goal, built a great infrastructure of schools, hospitals, workshops, aviation, shipping, farms, plantations, etc. That powerful infrastructure helped the success of the missionary effort, the reconstruction after the war and the opening up of the newly discovered highlands. Today the local Church is blessed with those structures, impressive but expensive in terms of personnel and finance. An asset or a liability?

The expatriate missionaries in the last decade or so tried to get rid of many of the economic enterprises like plantations; however, often local people complained that while the expenses got bigger the expatriate missionaries were getting rid of the local sources of income! The shipping and flying enterprises have been mostly closed down and the Church makes use, as far as possible, of commercial companies. However, schools and hospitals and a few other ventures remain. An asset or a liability?

ii.c) Power Structures

To achieve their success the mission societies invested very much in personnel and the infrastructure, as already mentioned. The present dioceses come from those areas of religious influence. The strength of the past becomes a problem for the present. It is difficult for the diocesan clergy to find its own footing in such a situation. Everything speaks of the missionary societies which established the local Church.

The traditional mission societies realised this and tried to break down their traditional power bases. For instance the SVD asked to be allowed to work in Bougainville, a Marist stronghold, and the Marists asked to work in the Simbu, an SVD stronghold. The MSC work in Hagen, a former SVD stronghold, the SVD in turn, accepted the call to work in Port Moresby, the former stronghold of the MSC. The SVD made known that it preferred non SVD Bishops for their former territories. Bishops, on the other hand, cooperated and requested other religious congregations to work in their Diocese. There was an effort to lessen the power of the former mission. However, one must recognise the problem to be motivated to tackle it. The power of yesterday can harm the Church of today.

ii.d) Personal Efficiency

Missionary societies were rather selective in their recruiting in their Western bases. Not only did they choose only those who had a clear vocation *ad gentes*, but also selected them very carefully, toughened them and trained them well. The people who came to the so-called missions, were not ordinary people. The Marist Sisters (SMSM) who went to the Pacific last century and stayed alone in God's forsaken islands were not just ordinary women. The Marists and the PIME who opened Papua New Guinea to the Gospel were not average priests and brothers. They were unusual people. They were above average. It was the quality of these men and women which helped the success of the mission.

What caused the success yesterday might be the cause of tensions today. I do not envy the local head master or headmistress who has to take over from one of those outstanding missionaries, who seemed to understand all the problems and — in the eyes of the people — could face and solve any difficulty. That person had better be top quality or he or she will get an inferiority complex. I do not envy the diocesan priest who has to take over a parish from a workaholic, Jack of all trades, 'fix everything' missionary. A person, who in his own country was by no means average, has to be replaced by somebody who is good but not necessarily exceptional. If that happens too often and in too many areas, there can develop an attitude of animosity between the foreign missionaries and those who are supposed to take over. If sometimes foreign missionaries are resented by the local Church workers, one of the reasons could well be their outstanding personalities and achievements.

One must remember that Melanesian society is a meritocratic one, meaning, the true authority is not gained through an ordination, or appointment, but is given by the community which experiences the charisma of a person. It is a typical 'big man' society. I am accepted and respected because society has experienced my qualities. A local community might be full of admiration for the outstanding foreign missionary and the young local priest or the young local sister who replaces him or her will feel it. The workaholics of yesterday might be out of order today!

Summarising: the powerful bases erected by the missionary societies in order to establish the local Church are being dismantled; however, they are still there to hamper the growth of the local Church. The efficiency and dedication of the past can cause frustration and resentment in the present.

iii. The Spirit of the Enlightenment

We saw the back of the medal of success: what is a relief on one side is a groove on the other. Now I would like to analyse the alloy used for the medal itself.

iii.a. The Enlightenment Mentality

The missionaries loved the people they came to serve. Especially before the development of antimalarials, many gave their young lives for the service. Papua New Guinea for decades was a graveyard of young missionaries. The love and dedication of the missionaries is out of question. However, the missionaries were children of their time and they could not be anything else. What was that time and what are the consequences for the Church today?

Melanesians were animists who believed and worshipped spirits and powers and were practicing magic. There was no question but that magic had to be eradicated and replaced by true religion. Spirits could only be either angels or demons. There were no other powers.

What are Some of the Elements of that World View?

Even if evolutionism was rejected, still, people believed in a certain type of evolution and development. The West was at the top of the ladder of evolution. Melanesians were people who were pretty low on the ladder both in terms of mind and spirit; they were still primitive. There was great hope, however, because Enlightenment and the Catholic Church believed in nature being basically sound and capable of good. They needed help and that was provided through civilisation and evangelisation. Teaching and training was the word. The aim was to help them climb the ladder and become like Western people.

Because the West was at the top of the ladder, it could not learn anything from people down at the bottom. The Westerner was the understanding parent helping young children. Melanesians were thinking, but not logically enough; they had morals, but not good enough; they were religious, but the wrong way. If there were customs and ideas that contradicted the Western ones, they were obviously wrong, and had to be eradicated

as primitive and pagan. No questions were asked.

Besides, science had clearly shown the evolution of religion from animism to polytheism to monotheism. Melanesians were animists who believed and worshipped spirits and powers and were practicing magic. There was no question but that magic had to be eradicated and replaced by true religion. Spirits could only be either angels or demons. There were no other powers. The powers people were talking about, either did not exist — people were primitive, childish — or they were devilish — people were pagans, living in darkness.

Moreover, because of the Rites Controversy, any discussion about ancestors was forbidden in the Roman Catholic Church. Missionaries going to China had to sign a document in which they promised not to discuss the issue or to allow their communities to do so. The founder of the Papua New Guinea mission on the North coast of the present

What grew was not shaped by local people or by the spirit of their cultures, but was erected by foreign authority which knew best how things should be. Secondly, it means also that the people got used to having things done for them from outside. If something was needed one asked for it and it would come.

Papua New Guinea was an ex-China missionary. So, even if the missionaries wanted, there was no chance of correcting the then current ideas about animism. The best the missionaries could do was to follow the policy of accommodation.

The result of this attitude of the West was that no dialogue could take place. Missionaries did know the customs of their people and wrote valuable ethnographic material. However, their background was not conducive to a deeper understanding of the cultural system as such. They knew and described the shells — the customs — but could not see the beautiful and strange pattern of the necklace those shells formed — the system, the culture itself.

A sad and embarrassing example of this attitude can be found in the '*Manuale Missionariorum*' which was prepared in a Japanese concentration

camp during the Second World War. The missionaries under the guidance of the Bishop used their free time to discuss their experiences and prepare a training manual for future missionaries. I know of a Melanesian priest who took upon himself the task to check all the libraries on the mission stations he visited and to burn every single copy of that *Manuale*. The opinions expressed about the Melanesians in that manual testify to the ignorance of the Melanesian value system, a system which would have helped to see things in a different perspective and present them in a positive, less offensive and denigrating way. Anthropologically, the missionaries could not see the wood for the trees!

The theological tenet that 'outside the Church there is not salvation' did not prepare the missionaries to discover other ways of salvation. It is impossible to discover something unless one believes that such a reality can and does exist. What did not resemble the biblical data was wrong, it was superstition. The only myths that could be considered for adaptation were the creation myths. The rest were human fantasies, not perceptions of God's revelation. One cannot blame the missionaries for not practicing dialogue, for seeing only animism, for condemning what they thought was a pervasive magic mentality.

However, even if we cannot condemn them, it does not mean that the Church in Melanesia today does not suffer from the consequences of this. Besides, a century is long enough to create a tradition. Anybody today who tries to dialogue and move towards inculturation, will have to reckon with the strong opposition of the traditional Christian communities. As one of the great Bishops of Papua New Guinea said: 'It would have been better, if we had started differently. However, now it is too late. If we change now, people will get confused'. Inculturation is theologically necessary, but it represents a serious pastoral problem.

Summarising: the alloy of which the medal was made, reveals serious deficiencies. The ideas of evolution and consequent superiority of the Western culture did not admit to the possibility or even necessity of learning from so-called 'primitives'. The missionaries knew best. Even if the missionaries believed and practised accommodation, they took on only the leaves of the culture but refused the roots of the same. Many Melanesians whether rightly or wrongly accuse them of having destroyed their cultures. The conviction of the impossibility of any salvific revelation outside the Bible hindered the possibility of discovering the presence of God waiting for the missionary to come, and explains the heavy handedness in theological judgement and pastoral praxis.

3. THE TRANSFORMING ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE FUTURE

i. Perfect Society or Salt of the Earth?

In the past the mission used an extensive and expensive infrastructure to achieve its aim of founding a local Church. The need was the overt reason for it. However, there was another hidden ideological component. The idea of Christianity as a perfect society, creating its own parallel institutions to the world: its own schools, its own hospitals, its own political parties. The world was bad, Christians had to move out of it, and create and live in a Christian world of their own. A kind of ghetto mentality.

Today we realise that the Church should not flee the world and reject it but live in it and transform it *from within*. It should be in the world and use the rules of participation and democracy to influence it. Concretely, does the Church need its own schooling system or should the Church not have dedicated Christians in the national education system? Should the Church maintain expensive hospitals or have its own committed people in the Government health system? One does not deny the advantages of the traditional system. However, the underlying idea of the perfect society is theologically wrong: we should be salt, yeast, in the secular dough. We should not provide society with our own better bread: we make the common bread better through the Christian leaven.

Beside the issue of the theological understanding of the role of the Church today, there is another contextual issue. The issue of true independence of the local Church.

These parallel structures are very expensive to run. They often make necessary the financial dependence from overseas. Interdependence is an aspect of the catholicity of the Church; however, the economic dependency of the South upon the North is not interdependency but naked dependency. It is a new form of colonialism. The Church must take a serious look at this situation. Structures mean expense beyond what the simple village people can give. This forces dependency from abroad. These structures can be seen as the way to keep the power in the West: new-colonialism.

It is not necessarily the local Church which creates or maintains these structures. Very often they are the former missionary societies, the former expatriate missionaries, who maintain their former schools, hospitals, etc., with the excuse of handing them over to the local Church. Their justification is that the local Church wants them.

Human nature always wants what is for free and starts reflecting only when the costs of receiving become higher than the advantages from the gift. If the local Church really wants them — and by local Church I mean the grass roots people — see whether they are willing and capable of paying the bill to stop the crippling dependency from the powerful West. Real independence in the present post colonial and post mission context is more important than so-called efficiency and visible success. It is sociologically wrong to think that one can limit dependency to only one aspect of society. Dependency in one field generates dependency in other fields as well. One cannot be financially dependent and theologically and philosophically objective and balanced.

ii. Perfect Religion or Servant of the Word?

It was the task of the mission to implant the local Church and this it did as we have seen already. The method used was not dialogue, leading to inculturation, but monologue leading to a copy of the so-called sending Church. Given the spirit of the time, this was the best the missionaries could do.

However, in spite of the successes, there are signs which force us to reflect. The ongoing religious movements in Papua New Guinea show that Melanesians are still searching. Either Christ is not the answer for the Melanesians — an alternative I cannot accept — or the missionaries failed to understand the questions of the Melanesians. This is more likely. The success of the small Churches, in their own way, seems to confirm that something is not right. The butterfly syndrome shows that they too are not the answer. Anthropological research indicates that traditional beliefs in spirits and powers are still pervasive. Church people explain these traditional beliefs as revivals of pagan practices, as signs of lack of faith, etc. Are they?

The Church of the future must realise that the Word of God has been at work in Papua New Guinea for over forty thousand years revealing God through Melanesian cultures. The Church has been sent by the Incarnate Word to continue that dialogue between God and his Melanesian children, not to begin a new one. The Church does not come with all the ready made answers for all possible questions but as the servant of the Word to dialogue with the people, listening to their needs, listening to their religious experiences as expressed in their pervasive and powerful symbols of spirits, powers, and rituals, in order to be enriched and to be able to challenge that religious experience with the scandal of the Cross.

Dialogue, challenge, inculturation: this is also the role envisaged for the Church by the Founding

Group

Reflections and Challenges

As the feast of Pentecost approaches, we have become more aware that mission is composed of many spirit-inspired encounters; it includes many challenges and imperatives:

- *dialogue with peoples, their cultures and traditions; inculturation is always 'in via' and continues the incarnation process.*
- *continual re-discovery of our roots and the challenge of new signs of the times.*
- *ongoing process of reflective living both as individuals and as communities, at all stages of formation and of our missionary journey.*
- *integration and 'compassion' (service and justice) and 'contemplation' (spirituality and faith).*
- *continual exploration of our communal God-experience.*
- *enjoyment in the discovery of our uniqueness through dialogue; yes, we delight in difference!*
- *the mission and task before us often „scares“ us; the gift we ask of the Holy Spirit is boldness and courage!*

Fathers of the independent State of Papua New Guinea.

The Founding Fathers saw the future of the country resting on two pillars: the 'noble traditions of the ancestors', and the Christian principles, which are now an integral part of Papua New Guinea.

By saying the 'noble' traditions, the fathers of the nation recognise that there are traditions that are not noble, that cannot be continued. Melanesians know that they must make choices, difficult choices, and they trust that the Christian principles will help them to choose properly. This is the shaping role they assign to the Church in Papua New Guinea.

However, for the Church to be able to advise, it must know the culture as well as the customs. Customs take their final meaning from the system to which they belong and which they express. The Church must recognise and dialogue with this cultural system. I used the singular, well knowing that there is no singular. However, there are values which can be called Melanesian in the singular because they are common everywhere. The Church must recognise these values and dialogue with them.

Let me give a couple of examples and then you will understand what a task the Church has.

Let me premise everything with a general anthropological principle. One must distinguish between ideal and reality. The ideal is what ought to be, the reality is the compromise we live by. As an example: Christ is the Christian ideal. He trusts the Father on the cross when he dies betrayed by his friends and mocked by his enemies. He dies for those who crucify him and forgives them. Not only he forgives them, but dies to give them life. That is the ideal of Christianity. The reality of Christianity is the way you and I live that ideal; the reality of the daily compromises and sins. It is the reality even of inquisition, of the witch hunts and burning, of the crusades, of slavery, of *apartheid*, etc., etc., etc. The Christianity we preach and believe in is Christ, but we know that we shall never reach it. We only strive towards it and not even everyone does. What we see and experience is not Christ — the ideal — but sin. However, what we see does not deny the reality we do not see.

Every culture and religion has an ideal we do not see and a sinful reality we see. We should never get the two confused. Besides, we should never compare the ideal of our religion with the reality of another religion or culture. The two are not commensurable. Unfortunately, this is what we all do most of the time: we compare the Christian ideal with the reality of another religion or culture.

The dialogue should take place at the level of ideals not of realities which are always distorted by human sinfulness. It is from the ideal that the reality must and can be challenged. It is for this reason that in this paper I will talk only about the Melanesian and Christian ideals.

ii.a) Marriage.

Marriage in Melanesia, as confirmed by the research just concluded by the Melanesian Institute, is a *communitarian* affair in the sense that two groups enter into a lasting relationship through two of their members. Moreover, the entering into a relationship takes time: it is a long process with clear markers on its way. The more markers are passed, the stronger the relationship, till, at the end, ideally, it should not break.

The aim of marriage is not directly the happiness of the couple but the well-being and strengthening of the community so that the couple, others children and everybody else, especially the sick and old, will find security and comfort. Marriage is, by nature, a service to the community; the greatest service of all.

The Christian marriage, on the other hand, is a contract between two free and mature persons. It takes place at a given time and place in front of a given officer and witnesses. This is according to Canon Law, can. 1055. The community does not enter into it.

The key differences between the two systems regard the subject of marriage, — who enters into marriage — the consent, — how people communicate with each other — and the aim of marriage, — why people want to marry.

Marriage is actually a case study not of theology but of culture and philosophy. One should not allow the theological issue to obscure the underlying basic cultural issue. The validity of the theological issue depends on the underlying philosophical one, and not *vice-versa*. The West is so sure about the theological issue because it assumes that its philosophical foundations are absolutely valid. Are they?

The Subject

Regarding the subject, in the West it is the couple and nobody else. The community does not enter into the definition and legality of marriage. In Melanesia the subjects are the two communities and the couple. The communities enter into a special relationship through the couple. The two realities — the communities *and* the couple — cannot be separated. It is not a question of the two communities agreeing to the consent of the couple, — this would

be the Western interpretation and compromise — but of the two communities entering into a special relationship with each other. Because of this relationship the couple is married.

What are the reasons for the cultural differences between the Melanesian and the West?

Melanesian philosophy begins with the community. Because there is a community there are human individuals. 'I am in relationship, therefore I am'. One who is not in relationship does not exist as a human being. The individual takes not only his or her identity from the community but his or her very existence. The individuals exist because of and

What did not resemble the biblical data was wrong, it was superstition. The only myths that could be considered for adaptation were the creation myths. The rest were human fantasies, not perceptions of God's revelation.

— as a consequence — for the community. The West, on the other hand, puts the individual at the centre. 'I think, therefore I am'. The individual is first and at the centre. The two types of marriage reflect these philosophical differences. The mis-logical issue is: must a Melanesian give up his or her philosophy or culture in order to be a Christian?

Because marriage is a sacrament and that sacrament has a long Western tradition, any dialogue on this issue is deemed useless in the conviction that the Christian West knows what marriage is all about. However, that knowledge is based on a philosophical tenet. One must prove that the tenet is philosophically the *only* valid one and the *only* one sanctioned by God. This, to my knowledge, has not been done.

Because marriage is a sacrament, one might be tempted to argue biblically. The problem is that the Bible has been read through the tinted glasses of Western theology and philosophy, i.e. of Western culture. As a matter of fact, one can read the Bible from the Melanesian perspective and say: God is communion — the blessed Trinity — and therefore community is at the centre. Community is the beginning and the end! Community is the alpha and omega. I am a European and my head spins trying to consider all the implications of this philosophy. They are staggering! The ethics would have to be rewritten. The issue is whether the Church allows itself to be challenged in the foundations of her

original culture without coming up immediately with a pat philosophical answer. Whose philosophy, by the way?

The centrality of the community is a key 'noble tradition' of the Melanesian Ancestors. Virtue is to serve it. The ideal person is the one who dies for the community, like Jesus did. The Founding Fathers of the Papua New Guinea Constitution want to build the future of their country on this value. Is the Church willing to dialogue or does it have the answer already? My purpose is not to argue the case but to point to the underlying anthropological and theological issues. The Church in Papua New Guinea cannot ignore them and be Church in Melanesia.

The Consent

The difference between the Western and Melanesian consent is that the former uses words while the latter uses deeds. The marital consent turns out to be a case study of cultural communication. It is unfortunate that once again the sacrament is in danger of covering a basic cultural and mis-logical issue. Is everyone obliged to subscribe to a Western communication pattern in order to be a Christian? This is the real issue and Marriage cannot be used as a smokescreen.

Relationships in Melanesia are expressed, strengthened and mended if broken not primarily through words, but through actions. This is the reason why there is no word for 'thank you' in Melanesian languages. There are deeds of 'thank you' There is no word for 'sorry'; there are deeds for 'sorry'. Melanesians do not create and express relationships through words but through actions. Because marriage is a relationship, it follows that Melanesians do not use words but actions.

The theological issue then is: do Melanesians, in order to be married sacramentally, have to forgo their way of communication and for a moment follow and accept the Western way of communication? The compromise to use first the Melanesian way — in the village — and then, in Church, to use the Western way might satisfy the jurists but it is a cultural insult. It says through deeds — so that every Melanesian can understand it loud and clear — that the Melanesian way of communication is not acceptable to God, that it is not good enough for a sacrament, that it is not sufficient for salvation. The Western way must be added to it. Is that not repeating through actions what the first missionaries said, that Melanesians are primitive, inferior, and have to grow up to our Western standards?

This brings up a second problem: that of mar-

riage not being a legal moment fixed in time and place. Words take a moment to be uttered but deeds take time. When we judge a traditional Melanesian marriage as a 'process marriage' in the Western sense, we miss the whole point and make a mockery of the Melanesian values. A Melanesian marriage is the entering into of a relationship between two groups and two people not through Western communication but the Melanesian way.

We are not dealing primarily with marriage but with cultural communication. Do Melanesians have to give up their way of communicating in order to become Christians? I feel uneasy with compromises: they tend to cover up the real basic cultural issue and postpone if not refuse its solution. They are band-aids covering up serious untended ulcers. We Western Christians are quick with God and the Bible. Did not God reveal himself through the deeds of Creation? Is God's greatest communication of love not the action on the Cross? Why can't a Melanesian couple express their 'yes' through actions? The Melanesian 'yes' takes time — we talk about months and maybe years — and to force it into a symbolic gesture at the time of marriage is not primarily a pastoral compromise but a cover-up for Western cultural colonialism. The West does not trust the Melanesian way and wants to make sure that it is valid, as if God were Western and would not understand or refuse the Melanesian way! A Church that wants to be Melanesian, cannot ignore this issue.

The Aim of Marriage

According to Canon Law the aim of marriage is 'the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring', can. 1055. It is couple oriented. The Melanesian marriage is a service to the community providing security and continuity through offspring. Obviously, by serving the community they serve themselves as well.

Once again we are confronted by the centrality of the community in opposition to the centrality of the individual, in this case, two individuals. We have already spoken about this basic cultural problem.

This has further implications regarding the role of the child in marriage. For Western Christianity, the validity of marriage is not depending on the child. The covenant relationship between the two individuals is central and the child is the fruit of it, not the essence. Marriage must be open to the child but does not depend on it. For traditional Melanesians the child is a key aspect of the service to the community. It is an essential element of that service. If it is not there, marriage is wanting in something essential.

Ethically this means also, that an honest couple, beside everything else, feel guilty because they fail in their greatest responsibility towards the community.

I repeat: I am not arguing about marriage but about Melanesian identity, Melanesian values, Melanesian communications. It obviously affects marriage and other sacraments as well. However, the sacraments should not be used as a smoke screen for Western cultural colonialism. No Church in Melanesia can ignore these cultural issues and call itself Melanesian.

ii.b) Let us take Religious Life as another Case Study.

During the Synod on Religious Life I am sure that these issues have been thoroughly discussed. However, allow me to share some of my experiences and personal reflections based on my work with Melanesian religious. As I see the reality of religious life in Melanesia, the key problem is not consecrated chastity, neither is it obedience. The key problem has to do with poverty. This is so because of the Melanesian value system. I will try to explain.

For me as a European, possessions are valuable in themselves. They add something to my identity. I do not say that this is right or wrong; I say this is what is happening, this is what I read from the way people act and react. I display my possessions so that people can see who I am. I dress well and put my jewels on. In a way, what I have adds something to me. Destitution, the lack of bare minimum material things, is not only a physical hardship, but a psychological one as well. One feels inferior, less than the others. One feels ashamed.

Melanesians act differently and that forces me to deduce that probably they feel differently. A traditional Melanesian does not keep valuables for him or herself. A valuable is valuable when it is given away. For a Westerner a valuable is something he or she keeps and treasures. I might display a bird of paradise on the wall in my room. A Melanesian will hide it and at the next exchange he will show it and give it away. A Melanesian who negotiated for months if not for years to obtain a valuable shell or a necklace will not put it around his neck. He will hide it and when the time comes, he will give away what he worked so hard to get. Let us think of the Kula Ring made famous by the writings of Malinowski.

Possessions are not valuable in themselves. The object is valuable because it enables one to establish a relationship, and that relationship makes the person, adds to his or her identity. Possessions are

Group

We rejoice in the wealth of the diversity of this assembly and of our small group. This seminar enriched us through the experience of the particular Churches of the Philippines, Indonesia and the Pacific Islands - an area of the world where great diversity is lived.

The richness of diversity was a theme that came up repeatedly in our discussions. It opened us to an experience of God who is always greater than our experiences and to a Church in which unity is something other than uniformity, and in which each people can be faithful to roots and identity.

Looking at our past, we acknowledge our mistakes and the extent to which we have absolutised our concepts, our policies, our institutions. We recognise the spirit of God at work in the life experience and religious traditions of the peoples of these regions. They challenge us to hear the Word of God as they experience it through nature and human relationships, with their underlying vision of harmony and communion with the ancestors.

As we move into the future, we hear the call to be in true partnership with the indigenous peoples. In the multiplicity of gifts, in the variety of languages, of cultures, and of religious expressions, we recognise the outpouring of the Spirit of Pentecost. Guided by this Spirit, we marvel at the presence of God renewing the face of the earth, and we accept the call to witness to this God and to God's marvels.

seen in the light of the key value of relationships. Material things are not of great value; relationships are. This seems to be one of the key differences between Western and Melanesian cultures. The West values material possessions, while the Melanesian values relationships and gives away possessions to establish relationships. The heart of Western minded people is on possessions, while the heart of Melanesians is on relationships. For the sake of relationships they give away everything, their stores go bankrupt, they overload their vehicles till they break down. They drove the development workers up the wall with their, so-called, irresponsibility in the handling of material things.

Because material things in themselves are not a Melanesian value their renunciation is not necessarily a loss: it can be a real gain. My fellow Italian,

The Church of the future must realise that the Work of God has been at work in Papua New Guinea for over forty thousand years revealing God through Melanesian cultures. The Church has been sent by the Incarnate Word to continue that dialogue between God and his Melanesian children, not to begin a new one.

Francis of Assisi, had a cultural point in renouncing possessions and embracing poverty, in order to be free for Christ. But what is the meaning for a Melanesian? I remember in my trips through the bush in my pioneer days trying to figure out who was the big man. Possessions do not mark him. He is powerful not because he has, but because he gave away so much. Yes, in order to give away one has to have, but this is not my Italian ideal and was not that of Saint Francis either. There is a basic cultural difference I can sense but not clearly define. Western goods and Melanesian goods are not the same: they are part of two different cultural systems and — anthropologically — phenomena take their final and full meaning only through the system. The vow of poverty assumes that they are identical. I seriously question this cultural assumption.

I agree that today with consumerism coming in, renunciation of possessions might gain in importance. However, this is a diversive action to avoid the real cultural issue. How does a Melanesian understand Gospel poverty? What is evangelical poverty? Is there an absolute evangelical poverty or

only a cultural reading and interpretation of the Bible? Vows are supposed to express and to facilitate one's dedication to Christ. Is 'lady poverty' the ideal way to Christ for a Melanesian? Or must a Melanesian religious put up with it because it is a Western tradition which created great saints and still helps me, a Western missionary?

Religious life is not only special dedication to Christ, but special service to society as well. The question is whether poverty for Melanesians is a help or a hindrance to this service. As already mentioned, in Melanesia, relationships are built, expressed, strengthened and mended, if broken, through an exchange of material goods. In this system material things are important for and necessary to build and strengthen relationships. A Melanesian to express love and care must give something. If love is mutual there will be a frequent giving and receiving of material things. This is the way of life. For the Melanesians who went through a Western novitiate and learned about poverty, and like to keep the relationships with their friends and show love to everybody, there is a basic tension. Of course through regulations one can determine how much can be given and report how much he/she receives, and the vow is kept. In front of the law we are all right. But this misses the point. The real point is: is poverty helping Melanesians to come closer to Christ and to live Christ-like, loving every one as the Father in heaven does? Or are we saying that through clever legislation, even a Melanesian can survive under poverty? Are we talking about legalism — not breaking the law — or about coming closer to God and to people? Is it a useless burden or a help? Is poverty a help or a hindrance?

If I said that poverty is the vow creating the most immediate problems, I did not mean that the others do not create cultural problems. They do. However, *sufficit diei malitia sua*: poverty is problem enough for this paper!

ii.c) Let us take another Case Study: the so-called Magic Mentality.

Magic is condemned as being against the first commandment. People label it superstition, primitive logic, primitive technology, etc. However, it is an integral part of daily life for many Melanesians. We cannot ignore it anymore. In magic are we really faced by human limitations and sinfulness or are we confronted with a different way of experiencing God's care for his children? Is magic an aberration or a different though valid form of religion?

Phenomenologically one can distinguish two

basic religious experiences. In the first experience the Ultimate, God, is experienced as caring directly in a gratuitous way for his children. This religious experience is expressed especially in the stories of creation. The response is the opening of one's arms in prayer, in the classical *orantes* style expecting everything from God, the Creator and giver of everything. This religious experience was mediated in those cultures where humans depended entirely on nature. We might call it the religious experience of *gratuitness*. The Ultimate always intervenes directly by providing what is needed. *Grace* is written large in this type of religious experience.

However, there is a second religious experience, where the Ultimate is not experienced as providing the food directly. The Ultimate is experienced as providing the knowledge and the power to produce one's own food. Therefore the strict following of that given knowledge — the ritual — and the use of that given power is an act of gratitude and obedience to the Ultimate. It is an act of active faith. This is the religious experience of those cultures who depended for survival on their own knowledge and work in the cultivation of the land. We might call this experience the religious experience of *mediation*. The Ultimate intervenes indirectly by giving the knowledge and power to achieve what is needed.

Melanesians, obviously, belong to the second category. In the eyes of the first category, people belonging to the second category do not trust in the Ultimate and try to manipulate God with their actions. However, for the people of the second group, the performing of the ritual is a sign of trust in the Ultimate who gave the power and the knowledge on how to use it. They know that human knowledge and human effort would never suffice; that everything depends on the gift of knowledge and power. Therefore the strict obedience to the rituals. Of course, they did not get the power and the knowledge directly from the Ultimate, but indirectly through their own forefathers and mothers, through their own ancestors.

One will point to the reality of that religion, with its negative aspects, etc. As I said at the beginning: I want to talk about the ideal not the reality, whether the reality is the Christian or the Melanesian sinfulness. The reality can be understood and corrected only from within the ideal.

The aim of this paper is not to solve the problems but to highlight them as a task for the local Church. No Church can be Melanesian and ignore this issue.

4. CONCLUSION

The Church in Papua New Guinea must sort out its role in today's society. It must be salt and yeast to it, but it must choose the way, either by partly creating its own parallel structures and remaining economically dependent upon the rich North or by entering the structures of society and becoming economically independent. One cannot live in continuous economic dependency and be proud and independent in the other aspects of life. One must trade immediate results for future cultural and theological identity.

The Church in Papua New Guinea has a mission to the universal Church which is not satisfied by sending Melanesians abroad but by developing its own theological identity and sharing it with the sister Churches all over the world. The Papua New Guinea Church must study the way God revealed Himself in Melanesia, highlighting not the theistic aspects — the West reflected on them long enough — but the aspects of mediation. The Papua New Guinea Church must have the courage to be different and be proud of it. It should be proud of its ancestors, spirits and powers and witness to its faith and obedience to God as expressed through them.

The centrality of the community is a key 'noble tradition' of the Melanesian Ancestors. Virtue is to serve it. The ideal person is the one who dies for the community, like Jesus did.

The prophets of old in centuries of struggle purified the tribal theistic religions of the Israelites. The Church must be the prophet purifying the Melanesian Christianity of today. A dean of studies of one of the Protestant Seminaries in Papua New Guinea once remarked: 'we missionaries were excellent in pointing out and condemning traditional religious abuses. However, we failed miserably in presenting Melanesian alternatives. The only alternative we offered was the traditional Western one'. To challenge is more than just to condemn and to forbid, it is to offer alternatives from within the system which is being challenged.

The Papua New Guinea Church — and with it the Western Church — must reflect seriously on inculturation: is it ready to respect Melanesian philosophy, world view, value system, and communications? Of course, Melanesians can communicate the Western way. The question is: is the Church willing to allow Melanesians to be

Melanesians in the Sacraments, religious life, liturgy, etc., or must they become Westerners? Often, I have the impression that the Church is not as yet aware of this problem and this makes it even more acute.

Missions are over, now the mission begins. Today we can learn from the mistakes of the past, and we find better help in the social and religious sciences. May the mission of today be as successful as the missions of yesterday!



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WINDS OF CHANGE AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE PACIFIC

Ennio Mantovani, SVD

1. Introduction

Many things presented in my first paper on Papua New Guinea, are valid as well for the whole Pacific. The stress might be different but the substance is very much the same, as the students from that area confirm every time at my classes on 'culture and mission'.

There is one issue I did not elaborate on in the former paper but which is very relevant for the whole Pacific. It is the growth of the small Churches and the loss of membership in the traditional ones, Catholic included. Somehow we failed and people have turned away. We are a light, but maybe it is like in the huts I used to visit in the mountains of Papua New Guinea: the fire gives light and warmth; however, sometimes the smoke is so strong that I had to go out into the dark and cold to stop my eyes from watering and hurting. Maybe the people going to the small Churches want to find fresh air also. Their eyes are smarting. From what? This we must find out to be able to talk about the mission of the Church today.

There is on the market a new book entitled, "Winds of Change" by Manfred Ernst (PCC, Suva/Fiji, 1994). The book presents the results of research on New Religious Groups (NRG) in the Pacific. The research was sponsored by the Pacific Council of Churches — of which the Roman Catholic Church is a member — because of their concern with the phenomenon. The study confirms that the NRGs are growing at a rapid pace at the expense of the (Mainline Church). The projection by the author is that one third of the generation after next will have changed religious affiliation. The explanation for the growth of the NRGs is the failure of the MLC to cope with the rapid socio-economic change. There is a spiritual vacuum the NRGs fill.

In this paper I shall first look at the changes taking place and the situation they have created, then at the answer provided by the NRG and at the

shortcomings of the MLC as presented by the author of the above mentioned study, and finally at the mission of the Church in this situation.

2. THE CHANGES

i. Religious Situation

The Pacific can be called a Christian region. Forman writes:

The Pacific Islands were now, in all probability, the most solidly Christian part of the world. At the beginning of the century many of the islands' people had still not heard the Christian message. Seventy-five years later that situation had changed completely. Practically all of the islanders, except for the Indian people in Fiji, were Christians. The people were more devoted to Christian belief and gave church a larger place in their life than did the people of any other region. Christianity was more important here than in Europe, America or Australasia, the land from which Pacific missionaries had first come. (The Island Churches of the South Pacific, Charles W. Forman, Orbis, 1982, p. 227).

The Roman Catholic Church is a minority in the Pacific. As a matter of fact, the Catholic missionaries came only when the Protestants were already rather well established. Especially in Polynesia, with the chiefs system of society, once the powerful chief is won over, then the whole society follows. It is then understandable that, when years later the Catholics arrived, they were refused access. Unfortunately, a few times, the Catholic returned under the protection of the French warships, so in Tahiti the Picpus, and in Tonga the Marists.

The only big island where the Catholics arrived first — there were a few minor ones where they arrived first — is New Caledonia, where the

Marists started work, gave up and then returned. In the Solomon Islands the Marists and the PIME after them, were first also, but seven years later had to give up and came back only much later. Blessed Mazzucconi belonged to this group.

The religious situation is similar to the one I presented in the paper on Papua New Guinea. Western enlightenment made dialogue impossible. The missionaries were not in the position to be able to grasp the fact that the basic religious experience of the people of the Pacific was different from the Western one but equally valid. Instead of challenging this traditional experience with the Gospel, the missionaries tried their best to replace it with the Western one. Obviously, this is hardly possible and the end result was an official Western Christianity where ancestors, spirits, powers, land and community hardly played any role, and a hidden religion based on the traditional experience where the ancestors, the power which permeates the universe, the land and the community were basic values.

As a matter of fact, there is something like a regional identity growing among the élite: It is called the Pacific Way, or, in Papua New Guinea especially, the Melanesian Way. These terms express the fact that people feel deeply about and are guided by values which bind them together.

Religion is the core of a culture and as a consequence of this missionary approach in the encounter between traditional and Western cultures, the Pacific Christians were handicapped in the process of acculturation. They could not fall back on the core of their culture — i.e. their religion — to react and adapt in a positive way to the new cultural situation. The result is confusion, lack of cultural identity, inability to cope with the changes.

ii. Cultural Situation

By saying this we have already touched the issue of the cultural situation. The Pacific is very rich in cultural traditions; however, one must be aware of the differences between Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia. One can see a continuum going from Melanesia to Polynesia in terms of wealth of cultures and vitality of the same. In Melanesia, traditional cultures are still very strong while in Micronesia the original cultures have lost their dynamism through contact with non-Pacific cultures.

The geographic map of the region gives an idea of the cultural brokenness. Oceania comprises nearly one third of the 6,000 known languages of humankind and once we realise that language is the key expression of a culture, then we grasp the variety of cultures which make up this area.

There are many people who think that the traditional cultures are doomed to die to make place for the global Western culture. It is a fact that 'The inherited identity which comes from place, land, and origin, is losing its relevance' as Crocombe writes, (Jahrbuch Mission 1994, Missionshilfe Verlag Hamburg, 1994, p. 6). We hear that this has already happened in parts of Micronesia.

However, I experience in young educated people — the group with whom I have more contact — a thirst to discover and own their cultural roots in the face of the alienation caused by the onslaught of Western individualism and consumerism. There is, obviously, a tension between traditional identity which is felt as very precious and the pull of the new way of life in which they live.

The fact that there is cultural change is normal, it is not a sign that the cultures will disappear. It is like the continuous change of our skin which is necessary for our physical health. Culture is an adaptive system and it cannot but change. However, there are changes which are according to one's cultural roots, and therefore enrich while developing the culture, and there are others which are a betrayal of one's ideals and therefore harm and destroy it. The role of the Church is not to try to stop changes or, worse, to try to turn back the clock of history, but to motivate and enable people to choose not what is easy but what is according to their cultural and Christian ideals. Some people say that this is not realistic. It is as realistic as the call by Jesus to choose the narrow road; it is the call to pick up one's daily cross and follow him. This is what mission is about. Culture needs Christ to live up to its ideal and Christ needs cultural ideals to incarnate the signs of his kingdom.

As a matter of fact, there is something like a regional identity growing among the élite: It is called the Pacific Way, or, in Papua New Guinea especially, the Melanesian Way. These terms express the fact that people feel deeply about and are guided by values which bind them together. They can basically understand each other and feel unity even in their diversity.

It is the possibilities of travel and communication today which allows people to meet each other and discover that they share many things which makes them different from the White people: their rootedness in the land that cannot be alienated, their link

with the ancestors who they feel are present, the responsibilities towards the members of one's community, the continuous exchange which keeps the relationships alive. All these values are common and bind them together and set them apart from the former colonial masters.

The real danger I see in Melanesia, and my reading confirms the same for the whole Pacific, is the abuse of the cultural values by the *élite* to exploit their own people. This is possible because there is a difference between the cultural symbols one can see and the meanings which find expression in them but are often unconscious. One invokes the known traditions while forgetting and/or twisting the meanings they used to convey. Let us take for instance compensation. Compensation was the effort by a society which communicates through gifts and not words to re-establish broken or endangered relationships. The gifts expressed the value of good relationships, and the centrality of the community which is built on them. However, today one uses the relationships to get gifts for egoistic purposes, even to the point of destroying the community they were meant to build and strengthen. The simple people, all over the world, know what they must do, but not the reasons why. This ignorance is the base for exploitation. This is a field of education where the Church must get involved.

The West does not realize the role of the cultural identity for the survival, progress and development of tribal societies. I must know who I am to be able to choose between the alternatives presented by present day life. However, as Thomas said, *gratia supponit naturam*. The Christian identity must be based on the human, natural identity, on the cultural identity. It is then that I can reject certain alternatives because I recognize them as contrary to my cultural and Christian identity. On the other hand, the identity will give me the motivation and the strength to withstand the temptation to choose the easy way of dependence, of consumerism, of individualism, etc. All development work, all liberation theology is doomed to failure if it is not based on the recovery of one's cultural identity.

iii. Economic Situation

Because of the population growth of the world, the Pacific basin is becoming more and more important for the food it can provide and the mineral potential of the sea bed. It is already important for the huge rain forests of Melanesia and the mineral wealth of Papua New Guinea. The multinationals are already at work to exploit this rich economic potential.

It is very difficult to generalise; however, one cannot talk about great poverty or destitution in the

Pacific. For instance, in Papua New Guinea, the largest country in the Pacific, 98% of the land is still in the hands of the traditional owners. The poverty is relative. The economic situation is far from being hopeless. There is hope and therefore it is difficult to convince the grassroots that the future can be bleak unless they get politically involved in the sense of liberation theology. For the foreign observers there might be signs on the wall but the communities do not see them and do not fear their meaning. Liberation theology is not something which grows naturally in this part of the world. It is the West pushing for it: it is from the top down.

iv. Political Situation

Surface and population-wise, Oceania is small compared to giants like China, USA, India, etc.; however, the Pacific island States have more power than their population would justify. The 22 States

Instead of challenging this traditional experience with the Gospel, the missionaries tried their best to replace it with the Western one. Obviously, this is hardly possible and the end result was an official Western Christianity where ancestors, spirits, powers, land and community hardly played any role.

can outvote the US, Japan, China, and India together! Here there is a tremendous political potential that can be activated for better or worse. Who has the power to activate it?

According to Ron Crocombe, who is an authority on the Pacific, there are three powers: the Governments of the region, multinational business, and organised crime. 'Earlier the Church was one of these three big categories. Now not anymore!' states Crocombe (Crocombe, p. 3).

He predicts that the North-East Asian capital will gain in power. United Europe gained in muscle especially with the opening up of the East. The USA remains strong. However, it is Asia which seems to claim the future and for that they need the Pacific. The cold war is over but the economic one is not. It will be fought not with guns but with capital.

With the influx of Asian capital there will be a shift away from the democratic principles of the West to an Asian way of seeing society and individ-

uals in it. It was already obvious in Papua New Guinea with the 'look north' of Paias Wingti, the former Prime Minister. He was looking to the North for capital meaning to Asia, and was enthused by the strong-handed democracies of Indonesia, Singapore, Korea, etc., he wanted to imitate.

The presence of organised crime in the Pacific might come as a bit of a shock for many. What is even more shocking is that, according to Crocombe, it is the fastest growing power in the area. The Governments still sign the contracts and make the laws to facilitate business, however, they are more and more manipulated by the money from outside. Most of the money, according to Crocombe, is with people who belong to organised crime.

This organised crime is not Western anymore, it is Asian. Not much to rejoice about. These people have enough money to bribe and are ruthless enough to kill if needed. A classical example is the

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one of Judge Barnett who was stabbed in Papua New Guinea. He was investigating the logging situation in Papua New Guinea which is mostly in Asian hands. He escaped death thanks to medical skill. However, he has gone from the Papua New Guinea scene and his files have disappeared. What we have of his findings about logging, we received from Australia. To crown everything, not too long ago the offices of the Forestry Ministry in Port Moresby were burned down and all the files were lost. This is what Crocombe talks about.

Crocombe writes:

What makes the situation even more complicated is the fact that Governments, business, and organised crime integrate more and more, and it becomes more difficult to tell, and they cooperate more and more against the interest of the people. 'Democratic' parties need money for

their campaigns, and politicians have their own ambitions and desires. Those who have most of the money in their possession and are the most interested in influencing the political decision makers belong to the organised crime. 'Little' Governments are easier and cheaper to bribe than big ones (ibid., pp. 3-4).

One might ask: how do the grassroots react to this situation? The people of the Pacific, like people all over the world, are more interested in their daily life than in ideologies and follow those who offer something they can see and enjoy immediately. If, by any chance, the media are in the hands of those who have a vested interest in the exploitation of the country, then one realises the hopeless situation. This for instance is the case in Papua New Guinea where the Malay company which dominates the logging business has founded a daily paper which undermined the other daily and now intends to buy it out. This is the context where the Church finds or should find its mission.

3. THE ANSWER BY THE NRG

i. Which Are the Groups?

Ernst distinguishes: 1. Established NRGs like the SDAs, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Assemblies of God, Brethren Church, etc.; 2. most recent arrivals like New Apostolic Church, Church of Christ, Church of God, Church of the Nazarene, etc.; 3. breakaway groups from the MLC and he numbers 19 of them in the area he covered — there are a few more in Papua New Guinea; 4. other religions like the Bahá'í, who are very active and successful; and, finally, 5. Evangelical-Fundamentalist Para-Church organisations like the Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth with a Mission, etc.

According to Ernst most of these groups have their roots in, and still have links with, the West.

ii. What Is Their Teaching?

It is difficult to do justice to such a variety of beliefs; however, they seem to have something in common.

The NRGs' answer to the present socio-economic situation is straightforward, based on a certain biblical interpretation of history. Most of the NRGs — some of the groups like the Bahá'í are not Christian, but have equivalent interpretations — interpret the present situation in terms of the last days of the world with the evil growing as expected. The imminent coming of Christ will destroy the evil and establish his justice. The present socio-economic and political situation is seen in terms of

the struggle between Satan and Christ and the former and his cohort are already doomed. The group belonging to Christ should rejoice in spite of the difficulties as their salvation is literally at hand.

Humans cannot do anything but wait and pray, and therefore political and social action does not fit into this perspective. These groups practice help for the needy but the help does not try to overcome the causes of the needs: the causes are 'spiritual' and Christ alone can and will take care of them. The author calls this interpretation and solution 'spiritualistic'.

Together with this simple world view goes a clear and simple ethic. In a situation where the traditional norms are losing their hold the NRGs substitute them with clear and strict rules of behaviour based on biblical texts. The NRGs find the needed help to go against the trend and by doing this they feel better than the others who get drunk, gamble, steal, and ruin their own and their families' lives. This difference from the others is a confirmation of the new life in them. Often people point to this different behaviour to prove something new in the NRGs. Baptism is equally a powerful symbol of this new beginning.

iii. Facts and Figures.

The author states, as we already mentioned, that if things continue the way they are, one third of the people will have changed denominational affiliation in just over twenty years. Here are a few samples to give an idea both of the rate and variety of growth.

	Tonga	W. Samoa	Fr. Polynesia	Fiji
Year:	1966-92	1966-92	1966-92	1966-92
MLC:	90.1 68.1	91.0 80.3	83.6 78.7	48.2 43.3
NRG:	9.7 29.5	8.9 18.6	8.6 17.2	2.9 11.6

The 1990 Papua New Guinea census confirmed the growth of the NRG in Papua New Guinea as well. The SDA grew 8 per cent from 1980 to 1990, while the Pentecostal groups marked an 18 percent increase over the same period. (David Vincent "Documentation on the Churches in Papua New Guinea. Reflection upon the 1990 National Census" Catalyst 1993, 1:39-56).

Ernst says that the losses of the RC Church are lower. For Instance in Papua New Guinea, according to the 1990 census, the loss is 1 per cent (one must take into account also the 2.1 per cent of natural increase in the population). Two comments: there are losses, and whether they are higher or lower than somebody else's should not obscure the fact that they are losses and must be taken seriously. Secondly, sometimes one wonders whether the official figures are correct. Looking at the discrepancy

between children who have been baptised and should receive Catholic instruction and those who receive it, one might surmise that sometimes the loss is greater than we think.

vi. Reasons for their Success

The general reason for the growth, according to Ernst, is that "the NRGs are filling what the author calls a 'religious vacuum', caused by the ineffectiveness of the Historic Protestant Mainline Churches who have largely failed to meet the needs of the adherents in a changing socio-economic environment" (ibid., p. 232).

There are three elements in this statement: the first is the service the NRGs offer to the people they

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attract, secondly the failure of the MLC to do the same, and thirdly, the present socio-economic context. We already mentioned the changing socio-economic environment so we concentrate on the other two elements.

vi.a) Response by the NRG

Help at cognitive level

We already mentioned the very simple and clear theology of the NRG.

Everything is explained in black and white; simple to grasp without any buts. It is a radical dualism between bad and good. This world is evil and Christ will change everything. These groups are anti-liberation theology because they expect the miraculous intervention of Christ: we cannot do anything. Their revolt is not physical or political but spiritual. Probably they go for the spiritual revolt because there is no charismatic leader for the political one or because there is really no hope.

The signs of the time (Mt 24:1-5) and Revelation are interpreted in a way that makes sense to the people and gives them hope. As soon as a convert is bound up with this approach it is no longer important if hatred, violence, war, hunger or disasters increase, because, as it was put in a SDA publication, 'all the while there is something most

Group**PRIÈRE:**

Merci, Seigneur, de nous avoir permis de vivre quatre jours de vie fraternelle, cherchant à connaître les meilleurs chemins pour correspondre, comme religieux (ses) à ta volonté aujourd'hui.

L'Église des Philippines, d'Indonésie et du Pacifique nous interpelle et nous comprenons un peu mieux que la Nouvelle Évangélisation passe par l'acceptation de se laisser interpeller par d'autres personnes, d'autres cultures. Nous ne possédons pas toute la vérité. Nous avons fait des erreurs dans le passé - nous voulons être plus ouverts aux différences demain.

En cette Pentecôte 1995, Seigneur notre Dieu,

- nous te rendons grâce pour tous ceux et celles dans nos Instituts qui ont porté l'Évangile dans ces pays (Les Philippines, Indonésie, Pacifique) avec enthousiasme et générosité;

- nous te rendons grâce aussi pour ceux qui l'ont accueilli avec autant de générosité et qui sont maintenant témoins de ta présence et de ton amour dans le monde;

- nous te prions te nous envoyer largement ton esprit de lumière, de force et d'audace.

wonderful and pleasant taking place throughout the world. And that wonderful thing is the last sign before the coming of Christ (ibid., p. 246).

Bahá'í and LDS have a different appeal. For the Bahá'í there is the idea of eternal progression towards peace and harmony. The LDS share the same optimism: "As man is now, God once was; as God is now man may become" (J. Paul Williams, "What Americans Believe and How They Worship", (New York: Harper and Row, 1969, p. 391, ibid., p. 247).

Help at affective level

"One of the reasons given by members of the NRGs to explain their devotion, is that affective motivation counts more than doctrine. The religious community becomes their true family, with them they are among brothers and sisters. They are happy with them and find comfort" (ibid., p. 247).

Moral security. They proscribe alcohol and other stimulants and therefore they separate themselves and that gives them a sense of being better than the others. They are part of the elected ones. The strong laws help the weak will. They feel secure. Women see a better hope of not being beaten and of being respected. (Strange that because of their fundamentalistic approach to the Bible the women are not in key positions and are barred from ordained ministry).

In contrast to the historic mainline denominations, most of the NRGs are lay movements, which offer more opportunities for active lay involvement in various kinds of Church activities. Once the first step is taken, many converts are very sensitive to the variety of activities and help which they find in the new group. In all the NRGs the author investigated in the course of this study it is quite common to give each new member a special responsibility (evangelism, organising meetings, leading a special group).

They pull the individual, at least on the surface, out of anonymity, promote participation, spontaneity and responsibility. Conversion is usually celebrated by rebaptism. After that the new convert usually receives an intensive follow-up programme, with multiple contacts, home visits, spiritual as well as material support and guidance. So the respective NRGs really do appear to the convert as the embodiment of the Good News in a chaotic world (ibid., p. 248).

4. SHORTCOMINGS OF THE MLC

The success of the NRG brings out the shortcomings of the MLC. The author of 'Winds of Change' gives several reasons for the failure of the

MLC to respond adequately to the needs of the people, especially the young. I can react only from my Papua New Guinea experience. However, my observations are relevant as Papua New Guinea is both geographically and demographically the biggest area of the Pacific. Once again, what a pity that Papua New Guinea was not included in the research. It could have confirmed or qualified some of the results of the study.

I shall touch on: 'Cost of independence', 'Skin-deep Christianity', 'Hierarchical character of the MLC', 'Forms of worship'.

i. Cost of Independence

According to Ernst, one of the reasons for the failure of the MLC to present an adequate answer to today's needs especially of the young, is a side effect of their effort to achieve economic self-reliance.

My experience in Papua New Guinea puts a big question mark on this statement. Ernst has seen something, but I doubt whether he defined it properly.

Even admitting that according to Ernst this is only one of the many causes, and has to be taken together with the other causes, I seriously doubt whether economic self-reliance can be blamed for the losses. I know that MLC in Papua New Guinea do get funds from overseas and in spite of that they lose steadily to the NRG. What about the RCC? We are losing also in spite of our rather poor record on economic self-reliance. Simple economic self-reliance cannot be the cause. It must stand for something else.

But I question this interpretation even if the economic self-reliance stands for lack of better training. In Papua New Guinea Lutheran pastors enjoy a better academic training than the SDA. It is a fact that SDA cannot join MATS (Melanesian Association of Theological Schools) because they do not fulfill as yet all the academic conditions. Nevertheless, SDA gained over eight per cent while the Evangelical Lutheran Church lost four per cent over the last ten years.

I agree that the training for Church workers should be improved by adding social and religious sciences to the curriculum. But this addition does not depend on finances but on attitudes in the Churches. From my personal experience, the quality of training does not depend on money but on the attitude of the leaders in the Churches. As a case in point, the Melanesian Institute is available for courses in the major seminaries of the Churches. However, there is little request for it.

— *pour que nous sachions être davantage avec les hommes et les femmes que nous voulons accompagner sur ton chemin, partout où tu nous envoies;*

— *pour que nous soyons tes témoins transparents, avec assez de simplicité et d'humilité pour reconnaître ta présence qui nous précède dans la création et chez tous nos frères humains;*

— *parce que dans le dialogue, nous sachions trouver les chemins de l'inculturation afin de prendre en compte les valeurs ancestrales des hommes et des femmes que nous prétendons accompagner, tout comme la valeur de la modernité;*

— *pour que nous sachions donner aux laïcs assez d'espace dans l'Église pour développer l'œuvre du salut.*

Seigneur, que ton Esprit nous pousse à être créatifs aujourd'hui, pour que nous devenions chacun(e) des artisans actifs dans la construction de ce monde où tu es à l'œuvre dès son origine, et que tu veuilles porter à ton accomplissement.

The difference is not in easy access to money, nor in academic training and professionalism but in zeal and evangelistic spirit. Once an expatriate public officer — a non Catholic — with a long experience in Papua New Guinea, in one of our Orientation Courses remarked that in his opinion the Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea got rid of the expatriate missionaries too quickly and exposed their local communities to the onslaught of the NRG without adequate support and they lost them. In his opinion the issue was not money or education but the drive of the pastors. The new pastors waited for the people to come to them, while the NRG were active among the people. I think he had a point.

The pastors of the NRG are trained to be evangelists not bureaucrats in a parish office. And not only the pastors. Everybody in the community is active. You see them everywhere trying to convert, arguing, attacking the MLC, confusing members of the MLC who cannot respond. The NRG are very active in evangelism while the MLC have forgotten that to be Christian is to be missionary, to

In contrast to the historic main-line denominations, most of the NRGs are lay movements, which offer more opportunities for active lay involvement in various kinds of Church activities. Once the first step is taken, many converts are very sensitive to the variety of activities and help which they find in the new group.

be involved. Our Christians know more but do less. Where there are active basic Christian communities, as a rule, the NRG cannot succeed, and this has little to do with funds and economic self-reliance or even professionalism.

I am concerned about what Ernst says for another reason. Economic self-reliance is an aspect of the maturity of the faith of a community. From my experience, a community becomes more and more economically self-reliant by becoming aware of its responsibilities and by finding ways of fulfilling them. Outside help can hinder or even cripple this process of growth into full responsibility. I agree that in the short term the community might be limited in the ways it can operate; however, the faith is alive and in the long run, active faith is what counts.

ii. Skin-deep Christianity

NRG accuse the MLC of providing only nominal faith. Originally the Chief was converted and people followed him without being necessarily personally transformed by conversion. The NRG must take a personal decision and therefore they are committed. Usually this decision is followed by a sense of joy for having found the 'truth'.

The phenomenon of skin-deep Christianity is well known. My question is whether the issue is really personal versus group conversion — those group conversions happened generations ago; they seem a poor excuse for the situation of today — or whether it is because the heart of the Pacific cultures, i.e. the community of which the ancestors, spirits, and powers are constitutive, has never been inculturated and is not an official part of Christianity? What the NRG offer is not the solution but only a band-aid. It is a spiritual renewal and does help for a while, but does not touch what for many Pacific people is still the heart.

Ernst blames inculturation for the inability to cope with the new situation. The MLC are interested in inculturation while the NRG ignore the cultural traditions and offer a 'new ideological religious superstructure' (ibid., p. 266).

The new 'superstructure' might be more satisfying because there are no other alternatives, and I doubt whether the new ideological structure will be satisfying in the long run. I once gave a two day seminar on the Melanesian Value System to one of these NRG which is very successful in the Pacific. I was invited by their overseas leaders who were also present. I had over seventy pastors in front of me. Once I analysed their value system and put it schematically on the board, they were enthralled. One of their overseas leaders confronted them with a challenge from the Gospel. He had them cornered; however, none of those pastors gave in. They did not know how to get out, but they did not want to budge on their rediscovered Melanesian identity. (This might explain why I was never invited back).

Ernst has a point though. When we talk about Pacific cultures we should mean the cultures of today in the context of supermarkets, television, cars, bank accounts, unemployment, corruption, etc. It is in this context that inculturation takes place, not in a museum.

iii. Hierarchical Character of the MLC

Bureaucratic structures and formal authorities create obstacles to active commitment for participation in church life. Moreover the pattern of Church life was formed in a different cultural context at a

time when the Churches and agencies who sent the first missionaries were not deeply involved in the problems of society structures, resulting in that it often provided little scope for the expression of Christian concern for a changing society. Pastoral work in the South Pacific is still widely wedded to the 19th century missionary practices, and evangelistic outreach and services have little reference to the newly developing patterns of society today. As explained earlier, the young independent Churches are burdened financially and administratively with an institutional programme 'whose meaning for the total Christian Witness in the new situation has become increasingly difficult to define' (Paul Albrecht, "The Churches and Rapid Social Change", London, SCM Press, 1961, p. 59, *ibid.*, p. 267)

I think, Ernst has a point. Our ingrained clericalism often hinders the laity from getting involved. The small Christian communities offer a better chance of involvement for the laity and where the small Christian communities are alive, the NRG do not have much of a chance.

iv. Irrelevant, Static, and Ritual Forms of Worship

Many expressed dissatisfaction with the style of worship and religious practice exercised within the respective MLC. "The Pacific Islanders's natural need for spontaneity and emotional experience is usually not met. There is always the same in my church. The same people, same singing, same sermons, same activities, month for month, year for year. It is awfully boring" (*ibid.*, p. 270).

The question is: why are the forms of worship irrelevant? Once, during an ecumenical course for pastors in Papua New Guinea on the topic of Melanesian values, a permanent deacon told the group: 'I tried everything to make the penitential liturgy meaningful and attractive. I never succeeded. The more I tried the more I got frustrated. Now, after listening to what has been said on the value system I know why I failed: the liturgy is Western, full of words, without what for us Melanesians is essential: the deeds. I tried to improve it by adding even more Western words. I was on the wrong track'. I think the Deacon was right. The emotional aspect of the Pentecostal liturgies is a band-aid only, because it does not fully express the Melanesian soul, especially not that part on which the whole culture rests.

5. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE PACIFIC TODAY

The MLC, Catholic Church included, must real-

ize that the NRG exercise a pull in today's Pacific society. They are often a sign of hope for a better future. Their ethics might even help them to a better economic situation.

One might wonder how a society which values the community so much can allow it to be destroyed. How can Pacific people go against the key values of their cultures to join one of the NRG? The reason is that there are positive elements in the NRG which attract people.

The groups are new and belong to the modern world. By their existence they represent a revolt, a denial of the old and its shortcomings. They represent the hope for a better tomorrow. They are potent symbols of what the human heart desires. It is this symbolic dimension which makes them so attractive and very closed to reasoning. We humans live by symbols and are attracted by them, without even realising what they are. Symbols do not go via the intellect but via the heart. Beside this deep, pervasive, attraction of the symbol as such, there is also a cognitive attraction in the NRGs. There is a

The Pacific must develop its own theology of the community — community which comprises not only the living and the dead, but the land and sea, the forest and the fields, the birds and the animals, and the symbols of that unity: the spirits.

clear and simple explanation of the present situation. One understands and expects the worst from this world because of its rebellion against God, the Father of all good things. Sin and Satan explain everything bad in the world. One knows the reason for injustice, violence, everything. Nothing will ever surprise one. It might shock, upset, anger even, but never confuse. One knows.

However, this knowledge does not lead to despair but to the opposite. The greater the sin, the violence, the injustice, the closer the salvation. The negative is turned into fuel for the hope and joy that comes from it. The eschatological dimension of all these groups gives the certainty of close and radical deliverance. They can face today's ugly reality because they are sure that Jesus's coming is just around the corner. The dimension of sin today is the proof that Jesus is coming soon. The understanding of the situation is intrinsically linked with the sure hope of imminent salvation.

To deaden the pain of the suffering of today, the Groups make ample use of the emotions in their liturgy. For a moment the reality is forgotten, the pain is relieved, nature can recuperate and people can go back strengthened to face reality. It is the painkiller enabling people to bear the reality of life.

What is denied by the trust of their ideology — the communitarian dimension — is compensated by the warmth of the small group. This way the basic loss is not felt. People are not aware of it. Actually, the loss is more than compensated for by the warm feeling they experience. All are brothers and sisters. The emotions are often very high.

6. In the Light of This Situation, What Is The Mission of the Church in the Pacific?

i. There is a struggle going on between the traditional communal values and the Western disvalues of individualism, consumerism, competition, etc. The Church must help the Pacific people choose not what is easy and egoistic but the narrow and difficult road of the traditional ideals; the service to the community as Christ did on the Cross.

Today the élites use culture to justify their abuses. The Church must add social and religious sciences to its curricula to live up to its prophetic task today.

ii. The Pacific must develop its own theology of the community — community which comprises not only the living and the dead, but the land and sea, the forest and the fields, the birds and the animals, and the symbols of that unity: the spirits. The West is waking up to its philosophical and theological shortcomings and is trying to develop a theology of the environment. The Pacific Church has an obligation to the Universal Church to reflect theologically on its cultural value of community and share it to challenge the one sidedness of the West and enrich it.

iii. However, before one can theologise, one must: a.) know — have the facts, not the Western distortion of them — b.) understand: see the facts within the cultural system which gives the final and full meaning to the various customs, c.) accept that system as God's gift; be proud of one's cultural identity and heritage, d.) reflect on it in the light of the Good News of God's plan of salvation in Christ, in the light of God's Kingdom which is here and will come.

iv. Recognise the sins of today and call for repentance. However, the sins of today are as cultural as are the virtues. Therefore there must be serious socio-cultural analysis of the situation today to recognise the sinfulness. Today the *élites* use culture to justify their abuses. The Church must add social and religious sciences to its curricula to live up to its prophetic task today.

v. Recognise the way God has been communicating with his Pacific children in the past millennia: over forty thousand years for Papua New Guinea. As John 1:5 states 'the darkness could not overcome that light'. The 'we-have-it-too' theology is of little help. The Universal Church does not need the Pacific to hear what her great religious geniuses of the past have reflected on. However, the West must learn of the different ways God communicated himself to be challenged and enriched.

To do this the Pacific Church needs scholarly research and analysis. Major Seminaries are not equipped to do this. Their task is different: they have to equip people to hand on the deposit of faith. The Church needs an institute (institutes?) dedicated to this academic research with the freedom to do it. The teachers at the Seminary will be enriched by it.

vi. The Pacific church must confront the NRGs simple theology and clear ethics with a similarly simple and clear theology and ethics but which does not escape into spiritualism but motivates to commitment in the world while preserving the firm hope of God's intervention.

a.) This means to recognise and act on the fact that baptism is mission; to be baptised is to be called personally by Christ to be sent out to become his co-worker in changing this world, in taking sin away, in being light showing the way of Christ, in being salt and yeast transforming society from within.

b.) The Church must have a simple and clear theology of the Kingdom which motivates to action. I do not believe in adopting a ready-made theology from outside. The Kingdom, because of the Paschal Event, is a reality in the Pacific as well and therefore has its Pacific characteristics. What are the signs of the kingdom in the Pacific, the values of the kingdom in the Pacific; what are the sins against the kingdom in the Pacific and what are the alternatives? What does metanoia mean in the Pacific?

What the Latin Americans do, what the Asians do, is motive for rejoicing and for praising the work of God. It would not work in the Pacific because the context is so different as the research admits. The situation in the Pacific might and probably will get worse; however, the people do not see it that way.

The Pacific must discover its own mission basing itself on its cultural traditions in the world of economics and politics of today.

c.) The Church must catechise anew the faithful in this missionary identity and responsibility. From my experience of 15 years full time work in the adult catechumenate, what is needed are not books on orthodoxy but on orthopraxis. Actually I do not believe in books. One cannot catechise about missionary life without missionary praxis. Christian life is action. The whole daily life wherever people are, things like taxation, political voting, everything must be reflected on in the light of one's missionary call by Christ.

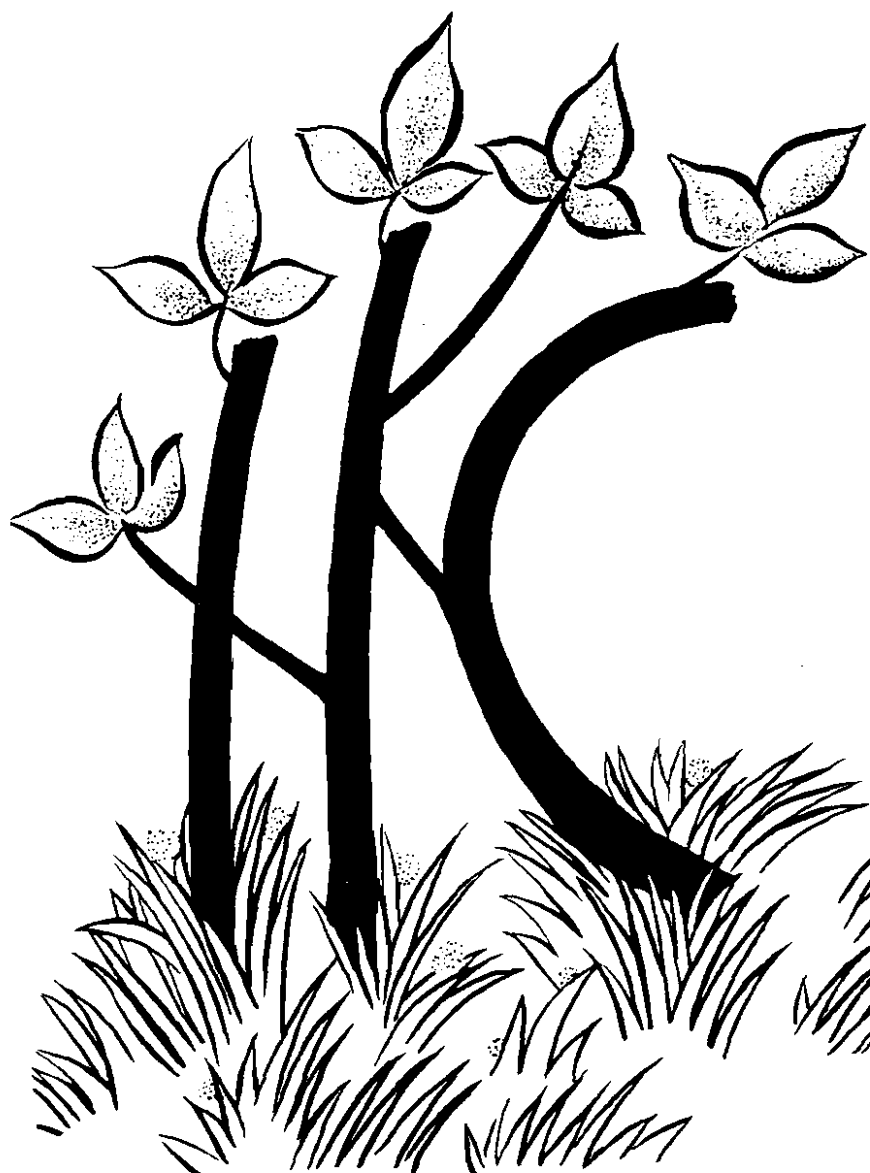
d.) The Church must educate the educators for

the new missionary catechesis.

e.) The Church must allow Christians to be Christians, that is to develop new structures which allow and enable Christians to be missionary in their own environment.

f.) The Church must act subsidiarily: allowing Christians — the laity — to go as far as they can, without intervening protectively. Encouraging more than warning. It must make space for the laity without falling into the trap of replacing the clergy with religious as a way of controlling the laity.

I think this should be enough work for the present generation...



SEDOS RESIDENTIAL SEMINAR***PHILIPPINES — PACIFIC ISLANDS — INDONESIA***

Ariccia, 30 May - 3 June

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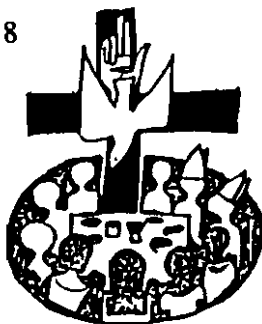
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mission moments

THE RWANDAN WOMAN WHO CHOSE TO FORGIVE

(RWANDA)

In a particular section of Kigali, Rwanda of mixed Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, the genocidal war broke out with a bloody vengeance. Neighbours attacked neighbours. In one area a Hutu man murdered his Tutsi neighbour. Later, after the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) won the war and took over the Government, local investigations of the atrocities started. The wife of the dead Tutsi man was asked to identify her husband's murderer. She refused knowing that the Hutu man would be arrested, imprisoned and perhaps killed in return. The woman said that she preferred to remain silent to save another life. She said: "This is enough. This killing has to stop somewhere. One murder does not justify another killing. We have to break the cycle of violence and end this genocide". So she chose to forgive.

Ref: *Overview*
Maryknoll Africa Area
Newsletter, June 1995
Nairobi, Kenya.

ALWAYS TRAVEL WITH A HOE AND A SPADE

(SUDAN)

Between Ikotos and Chukudum, near Lotome in Southern Sudan, I found vultures finishing off the

remains of a person eaten by hyenas, yet another of the many victims of terroristic bombing. The skull in the centre of the road forced me to stop the car. As I stepped down I saw vast quantities of dried up bones on the ground covering the whole length of the road. I had neither hoe nor spade to bury the remains of "my countrymen" like Tobit. Spontaneously I knelt down and prayed as the Holy Spirit could inspire me at that moment. Certainly, I could not prophesy like Ezekiel: "In the valley of dried up bones". But I recommended those dry bones to the Lord who alone can give life to the dead, for He is "the Resurrection".

Ref: *Overview*
Maryknoll Africa Area
Newsletter, June 1995
Nairobi, Kenya.

U.N. WORLD SUMMIT REPORT:

An Advance in Global Awareness

(COPENHAGEN)

In the halls of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, the image of Teilhard de Chardin came to me frequently as the growing global "noosphere" of awareness, consensus and connection seemed tangible and exhilarating. Returning to the Preparatory Committee Meetings for the U.N. World Conference on Women, the image was transformed into fragile footsteps in the sand threatened by winds and tides of political regression.

In Copenhagen, despite all the problems with the Social Summit indicated in previous Center Focus articles, valuable progress was made toward a global consensus on the causes of the current world economic crisis and on first steps that could be taken to address them. The nations of the world committed themselves, for example, "to the goal of eradicating poverty in the world". They agreed to formulate, preferably by 1996, "national policies and strategies geared to substantially reducing overall poverty in the shortest possible time, and to reducing inequalities, and to eradicate absolute poverty by a target date to be specified by each country in its national context".

This is important at home as well as abroad. It calls for the elimination of hunger and malnutrition, the provision of food security, education, employment and livelihood, primary health-care services, including reproductive health-care, safe drinking water, sanitation, adequate shelter and participation in social and cultural life". (Commitment 2) These are now real issues for millions of people in the U.S.

The Summit also achieved global consensus that economic restructuring — whether carried out through Structural Adjustment Programmes in debtor nations or through "economic reforms" in wealthier countries — must include social development goals and must always provide secure protection for the most vulnerable people in society. Programmes affecting the poor must be protected from budget reductions (Commitment 8).

There is too little space here to

summarise the issues of importance in the Copenhagen documents. Nor were all the Summit's advances reflected in its documents. Very serious political dialogue progressed behind the scenes on the necessity of regulating global financial speculation and on measuring and valuing unpaid work (most of which is done by women) as a way to assess social impacts of restructuring and currently hidden social subsidies to production. These issues are slowly gathering a maturity and a political urgency.

Many speakers at the Summit, including its Secretary General, Juan Somavia of Chile, gave credit for most of the advances to non-Governmental organisations (NGOs). NGOs provided most of the creative new ideas, lobbied their Government delegations, monitored what they said and did closely, and collaborated with NGOs from all around the world in an effort to apply the right pressure to the right Governments at the right time.

The result was hesitant but real progress on many issues and the creation of what one NGO representative called "a new culture of politi-

cal honesty". As the Governments embraced the Summit commitments, NGOs lined up to promise cooperation in realising the Summit goals and monitoring of the implementation efforts. We could practically feel Teilhard's "*noosphere*" growing in density.

Returning from Copenhagen to the New York PrepCom for the upcoming U.N. Conference on Women in Beijing provided a cold blast of what the cynical would call reality therapy.

The draft document for Beijing retreats dramatically from the Social Summit, identifying only global recession as the cause of current economic problems and insecurities. The agenda it promotes is years behind the Copenhagen consensus and the current focus of the global women's movement.

In addition, NGO participation has been effectively marginalised. All significant work was carried out by small groups of Government delegations behind closed doors. When challenged, the Governments appealed to the chaos of the process and exhorted NGOs to trust them.

Their work does not encourage trust. It reveals efforts to reverse advances made in recent U.N. conferences. Some Governments want the ecological consensus reached in Rio in 1992 watered down. Some are trying to weaken the agreements on human rights reached at Vienna in 1993. Some are trying to reverse the 1994 agreements of Cairo on population. And some seem intent on undoing Copenhagen. The frustration in the NGO community is intense.

While imperfect, the Social Summit did represent an advance in global awareness, understanding and commitment, even if only a tenuous and vulnerable advance. Its gains must be translated into actions, programmes and policies. It seems clear from the experience in New York that that will not happen without the untiring and fiercely tenacious commitment of the NGO community — and perhaps especially those in the Churches — to making it happen.

Ref: *Center focus*
Center of Concern
Issue n. 126, May 1995



COMING EVENTS

WORKING GROUPS

- September 15 World Debt - 15.30 hrs. at SEDOS
- September 18 World Debt - 15.00 hrs. (French) SMA Generalate,
V. della Nocetta 111
- September 27 The Philippines - 15.30 hrs. at SEDOS
- October 19 China Group - 16.00 hrs. at SEDOS
-

October 13

BELJING:

WORLD CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

One-Day Activity

Dra Eleonora Barbieri Masini
Sr. Helene Mc Loughlin, RSCJ
Sr. Rose Fernando, FMM

Fratelli Cristiani, via Aurelia 476, 09.15 — 16.00 hrs (translations)
