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EDITORIAL

Missionaries in Africa know how much their ministry is concerned with the question of health and sickness. **Fr PETER HENRIOT, SJ**, a missionary in Zambia, elaborates in his article the principles which should guide the Church's response to the sick which can be considered an essential part of mission and an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel as "good samaritans". —

What relation is there between the extraordinary economic development of the last two decades in East Asia and the local religion of Confucianism? **NOBORU YOSHITAMA** presents a very interesting study of the religious and cultural facts that can help us to understand the phenomena and consider them in our missionary efforts of inculturation. On all the continents, local theologies offer new understanding of the role of Jesus.

Fr **MICHAEL AMALADOSS, SJ**, in his article, presents some new ways of understanding Jesus as they emerge from the theological reflection of the Indian Church.

Fr **VICTOR CODINA**, a Latin American theologian, is glad to see that theology- is adapting to answer the needs of the new historical situation. He sees an important role for a liberative theology which will be done more and more from the 'conceptual environment' of the South.

Msgr **FEDERICO E. PAGURA**, a Methodist Bishop from Argentina, gives a testimony of the enormous challenge of reconciliation in an Argentina trying to overcome and integrate the systematic violence of the past years of the military regime.



THE CHURCH'S MISSION TO HEAL

REFLECTION ON BASIC THEOLOGY AND

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Pete Henriot, SJ

An International Workshop on Sustainable Health Care attended by many African representatives, including Ms Christine Mtize of CADEC, was held at Leeuwenhorst Congress Centre in The Netherlands, 25-29 September 1995. Fr Pete Henriot, SJ, from Zambia, read the following paper (slightly shortened) at this Congress:

Health care has long been associated with the mission of the Church to evangelise, to bring the Good News to all nations. In Mark's account of the missioning of the first Disciples after the Resurrection, Jesus promises that believers would "place their hands on the sick people, who will get well" (Mk 16:18).

This ministry of healing is a continuation of Jesus' healing activity. Throughout the Gospels, we have examples of the cure of the sick as an integral part of the preaching of the coming of the Kingdom of God (cf. Lk 10:9). In its missionary activity worldwide, the Church has always had a role in the delivery of health care.

Will that delivery of health care be sustainable? This question takes on a particularly urgent character when we reflect on the reality confronting the "countries with limited resources". (Is this the *politically-correct* language for the "poor countries"?)

My own reflection comes from the stance neither of a theologian nor a health-care professional. My training is in the political economy of development and my immediate experience is in a very poor African country. Therefore in preparing the topic assigned to me, I was particularly touched by the message of the World Health Organisation's publication earlier this year, *The World-Health Report 1995: Bridging the Gaps*. The Report says:

The world's most ruthless killer and the greatest cause of suffering on earth is extreme poverty.

Poverty is the main reason why babies are not vaccinated, clean water and sanitation not provided and curative drugs and other treatments are unavailable and why mothers die in childbirth. Poverty is the main cause of reduced life expectancy, of handi-cap and disability, and of starvation. Poverty is a major contributor to mental illness, stress suicide, family disintegration and substance abuse.

Poverty wields its destructive influence at every stage of human life from the moment of conception to the grave. It conspires with the most deadly and painful diseases to bring a wretched existence to all who suffer from it. During the second half of the 1980's, the number of people in the world living in extreme poverty increased and was estimated at over 1.1 billion in 1990 - more than one-fifth of humanity.

Poverty is the number one health problem in today's world. What we say about the Church's role in the delivery of sustainable health care must of course address that sad fact. I provide some contextual theology and macro-ethical principles for us to reflect on as we look at this topic.

A Changing Context

Today the delivery of health care by Church-related institutions and organisations continues to go on around the world as it has for many centuries. But within many of the countries with limited resources, there is a new context for the Church's role. This new context is marked by two significant movements, two important transitions. These are the movements toward 1) *political democratisation* and 2) *economic liberalisation*. The first provides a new context for Church-State relations, and the second a

new context for meeting the economics of health care. Because this topic is so broad, let me narrow it to the continent of my own experience, Africa, and be very specific with examples from the country of my own mission, Zambia.

Political democratisation is the transition from authoritarian regimes to forms of Government that allow greater popular participation under a constitutional rule of law that respects basic human rights. The 1960's in Africa was the period of "First Independence", when freedom from colonial rule was achieved and national identity secured. Hopes were high, as majority rule Governments took control and parliaments with multi-party organisation were put in place. But the experience of full freedom and dignity was short-lived in many if not most of the new African States. For a variety of reasons, internal and external, the hopes of the First Independence gave way to the rise of one-person and one-party totalitarian rule, and, in many instances, the oppression of military dictatorship. By the end of the 1980's, out of the 44 Sub-Saharan African States, some 38 were governed by authoritarian regimes.

Then a new experience of "Second Independence" began in the 1990's throughout Africa. Again for a variety of internal and external reasons, there has occurred a move toward political democracy, the rise of or return to a system of multi-party competition, the respect for free press, and hope of protection and promotion of basic human rights. In Zambia, for example, we ended a period of 27 years of one-person, one-party rule with a peaceful transition in 1991 to multi-party democracy. Other African countries have experienced similar transitions. South Africa, of course, is the most dramatic instance of transition to democratic majority rule and offers the greatest hope even amidst extremely difficult circumstances.

But the political democratisation movement is still too young to make evaluations of its success or predictions of its sustainability. In many parts of Africa there have been setbacks - most notably in Nigeria with the retention in power of a cruel military dictatorship. But what is important for our discussions here is that the movement for political democratisation provides a new context for the Church's mission of health care. Another paper of this workshop will specifically address Church and State relations. Here it is sufficient to point to two questions that arise: 1) Is a democratic context more conducive to the orientation of health care under sponsorship? 2) Does sustainable health care itself require today a more democratic style?

Economic liberalisation is the transition from a centrally-planned, State-controlled economy (Socialism) to a free-market, privatised economy (Capitalism). For a variety of reasons, internal and external, African economies declined in the period after Independence. Deteriorating terms of trade, increasing debt burdens, mistakes and misplaced priorities meant a fall in production and a decline in standards of living. Basic services and infrastructure deteriorated. Social indicators of health and education that had risen after Independence took a turn downward. By the end of the 1980's, of the poorest forty nations in the world, 27 were in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In an effort to turn around the economic decline of Africa and address the serious problems of widespread poverty, the international donors began pressuring Governments to change significantly the direction of their economies. The model of change adopted was that formulated by Northern economists associated with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The "Structural Adjustment Programme" (SAP) is an effort to bring short-term stabilisation (e.g. through devaluation, budget constraints, credit restrictions etc.) and long-term restructuring (e.g. through removal of price control, privatisation, trade liberalisation, etc.). Faithful adherence to this economic liberalisation is now a condition for any further aid assistance.

The experience of a country like Zambia is illustrative of the problems created by SAP. First, there is widespread suffering of the people. The elements of SAP such as the withdrawal of subsidies, imposition of fees in health and education, and retrenchment of workers impose especially harsh burdens on those who are already suffering. This point is strongly made by the Zambian Bishops in their 1993 Pastoral Letter, *Hear the Cry of the Poor*. Second, there is serious questioning of the long-term development consequences of SAP, since it does not address questions such as employment generation, agricultural production to feed the nation, the informal sector, regional co-operation, and the environment.

It is possible to point to two questions arising in this new context for the Church's health care mission.

What is the impact of increased poverty and suffering of the people on demands on the Church's health mission? Will Governments make increased efforts to put health care back into private hands of groups like the Church?

The context for the Church's health care mission is of course affected by other important events on the continent of Africa. These events include:

- The rise in internal conflicts such as the experienced in Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Burundi, and the danger of regionalisation of these conflicts.
- Increased numbers of refugees and internally displaced people, caused by these conflicts and also by natural disasters such as droughts and pestilence.
- The HIV/AIDS pandemic with consequences not only for health care but for economic development and political stability.

Theological Reflection

I want to suggest as a theological model the three-fold action of the Good Samaritan that we find in the well-known Lucan parable (cf. Lk 10:30-37). The Samaritan's response to the health care needs of the person beaten by robbers and left for dead along the Jerusalem-Jericho road included these elements:

- Compassionate awareness: not ignoring the needs despite pressures to do so.
- Effective immediate response: providing personal care even at great expense.
- Long-term structural response: providing institutionalised care in co-operation with others.

To begin with, the Church's sustainable health care must be compassionate. One writer describes compassion as "that divine quality which, when present in human beings, enables them to share deeply in the sufferings and needs of others and enables them to move from one world to the other; from the world of helper to the one needing help; from the world of the innocent to that of sinner". Jesus in his ministry is certainly the model of compassion, as again and again we are told in the Gospels that he is moved with compassion to take healing, comforting, uplifting action (e.g. raising the widow's son, Lk 7:13; feeding the 5000, Mk 8:2; teaching the crowds, Mk 6:34; healing the sick, Mt 14:14).

On the road to Jericho after the priest and Levite, the Samaritan sees what they also had seen: a man lying badly injured in the road. But the Samaritan sees with the eyes of compassion and enters into the suffering man's world. His awareness is not blocked by the pressures of going off for other important business, of fearing what involvement might bring, of revulsion toward such pain and anguish. He does not ignore the needs of the man precisely because he has been moved by compassion; his is a compassionate awareness, much deeper and much more compelling than the superficial and selfish awareness of priest and Levite.

In today's context of economic reductionism, there is little place in Government and business policy circles for compassion. The neo-liberal economics that guides structural adjustment programmes creates pressures to ignore and marginalise the poor and the suffering. Compassionate awareness is blocked by systemic emphases on budgetary constraints, competition, efficiencies, bottom-line exigencies etc. Furthermore, the sheer magnitude of human suffering in much of the world has given rise to the frightening phenomenon described as "compassion fatigue": people are simply exhausted, worn-out and wearied by stories of and contact with those who are suffering. *"Do not tell us any more! We have done our part!" (Who knows, possibly the priest and the Levite had just come from tending the needs of many others who had been beaten up on the road to Jericho?!)*

This theological model tells us, therefore, that sustainable health care in today's context must be motivated by a compassionate awareness that may be pressured and may be wearied but is never blinded.

The second thing to note in the Good Samaritan model is the *immediate personal response*. The Samaritan takes time to become personally involved, providing what help he can at the moment: *"He poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them; then he put the man on his own animal and took him to an inn, where he took care of him"* (Lk 10:34). Throughout the Gospel, we have stories of how Jesus reached out and touched someone in need, a sign of his personal involvement (e.g. curing a leper, Lk 5:13; straightening a crippled woman, Lk 13:10-13; healing a deaf-mute, Mk 7:33-37; comforting Peter's mother-in-law, Mt 8:15; feeding his own Disciples; Jh 21:13). His was not a distant, aloof, detached ministry. He became personally involved and shared whatever he could, most especially his loving presence and personal touch.

What does this personal involvement shown in the Good Samaritan model say to our effort for sustainable health care in today's context? There is a serious tension in health care in the industrialised world between two competing models of health care: health care *ministry* and health care *industry*.

In the former model, there is more personal, hand-on emphasis; in the latter, a technical, specialised approach means greater de-personalisation. But as you know so very well, personal involvement, the personal touch, is a medicine that no amount of technological sophistication can replace.

Our theological model thus points to the fact that sustainable health care must emphasise personal involvement of health-care givers.

Finally, we need to take note of the long-term structural response present in the Good Samaritan model. Not only was the Samaritan compassionately aware and immediately involved; he was also committed to further assistance through arrangements that involved planning, financing, and co-operative efforts. *"The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Take care of him', he told the innkeeper, 'and when I come back this way, I will pay you whatever else you spend on him'"*. (Lk 10:35). The Samaritan took steps to institutionalise the care given so that it would be effective. As important as his own immediate and personal care was for the injured person, it was not enough.

This "institutional" of loving care has been a mark of Church-related health care over years, in the best sense of the word. Hospitals, clinics, hospices, homes, etc., are all ways of assuring that the loving care can go on. Indeed, the establishment of these institutions by the Church was a significant step toward "sustainability" of health care before that phrase ever became popular. In the tight economic situation of today in countries with limited resources, commitments to institutions may be more difficult but also more necessary. The control over these institutions... not simply in financial terms but also, and more important still, in terms of values... is also a serious challenge in the new political environment.

Thus, sustainable health care in today's context must, according to our theological model of the Good Samaritan, find ways of effective institutionalisation of the compassionate and personal response of the Church.

Ethical Principles

In looking at ethical principles that would guide the Church in the delivery of sustainable health care, I want to make an initial distinction between the macro-ethical and the micro-ethical.

- *Macro-ethical* principles guide societal and institutional response and refer to topics in social policy areas such as access of the poor to facilities, priorities for the future, etc.
- *Micro-ethical* principles guide individual response and refer to topics in personal choice areas such as contraception, maintenance of life-support systems, etc.

Because my own training and experience is in the field of the political economy of development, my focus here will necessarily be on the macro-ethical principles. From my involvement in consultancy with Church-related health care systems in the United States in the 1980's, my impression is that considerably more attention has been on the micro-ethical issues than on the macro-ethical issues. That has meant in practice that some very significant points regarding institutional practices have not been subjected to as critical an ethical evaluation process as have been individual practices of medical personnel. An obvious point is that the ethical demand of concern for the poor - the implementation of the Church's mandatory "option of the poor" - has significant consequences that should affect institutional decisions and policies.

Let me suggest a set of four macro-ethical principles that should guide the role of the Church in the delivery of sustainable health care. These principles are related and all can be rooted in the theological model of the Good Samaritan that I have presented. As you hear the principles, I ask you to apply them to your own specific experiences and test their validity and relevancy.

Sustainable health care in today's context should be primarily ministerial (not industrial).

Sustainable health care should follow a ministerial model and not an industrial model.

This first and indeed foundational principle states very simply that providing health care is a form of service in and for the community before it is a form of economic activity, a commodity exchanged for profit. Care is to provide for whoever needs it. Who pays for that care is an important consideration, but it definitely is a secondary consideration. This at least has been the traditional ethic guiding health care over the years.

Now this principle may be simple to state, but it is increasingly difficult to implement. Of late, particularly in the rich countries, health care has followed more of an industrial model than a ministerial model. This is understandable given the pressures arising when health care assumes the economic proportion it does. For example, in the United States of America health care currently accounts for more than 14 per cent of the annual GNP. The fastest-growing sector of health care activity is the for-profit sector.

The ministerial model of health care emphasises:

- the service of persons with respect for equal dignity of all;
- a holistic approach relating to the whole person in the whole community;
- a focus on the spiritual dimensions of the person;
- a preference of the poor, the so-called "option for the poor"

The industrial model of health care emphasises:

- the pursuit of profit for a return on investment;
- specialisation for efficiency with attention to individual parts;
- technological effectiveness;
- competition in order to survive economically.

Although these models can be complementary - one must survive in order to serve! - they also can be conflicting in the values, directions, standards and ethos of an institution. For example, the option for the poor may be pressured to give way in the face of stiff competition and budgetary constraints. Sustainable health care in Church-related institutions in today's political and economic context must be guided by this macro-ethical principle of ministerial service if it is to maintain the religious character, the link to Jesus' ministry of evangelisation, that was the mark of its founding.

Holistic (not isolationist)

"Sustainable health care treats the whole person in the whole community, not isolating personal parts from the rest of the body or individuals from the rest of the community".

This ethical principle recognises that a human person is not a unique organism with isolated problems, but a whole. Not just a whole individual person either, but a part of that whole that is the web of relationships to the wider community, to the person's family, to their work, to their social situation.

Sustainable health care is guided by this principle when it avoids a hyper-specialised approach to taking care of a sick person or to preventing illness. I am more than my inflamed appendix, more than my malaria-caused fever. There is a spiritual dimension to my existence, in the sense of my belief, my hopes, my loves. This dimension too must be taken into account when I am seeking health care. For example, other professionals in society must be recognised besides simply the physician or the nurse. Religious personnel are not simply for offering "spiritual consolation" but have a significant role in the preventive and curative process.

Moreover, I am not alone, a lone individual. There is a societal dimension to my existence, a dimension that cannot be ignored in diagnosing needs and in prescribing remedies. Families, support groups, work places, all come into consideration in an holistic approach. And the cultural aspects of my existence are likewise seen as important. This is especially true where explicit cultural emphases are significant factors in holding a society together and in giving it its identity.

Once consequence for sustainable health care is guided by this holistic principle: the role of the traditional healer and of traditional medicine assumes a much more important role. This is certainly true in Africa. Recently I was speaking to some African friends who told me of the significance of advice from traditional healers and of the use of herbs, special diets, etc., that followed traditional patterns. They were not speaking of consulting the *n'anga* (witch-doctor) for medicines to seek revenge or enhance domination.

Rather, they sought to be in touch with the wisdom of a community that knew health remedies before the chemistry, technology and "scientific rationalism" of Western medicine came to control so much of health care activities. There is greater interest today in this traditional wisdom. It is certainly in line with the holistic ethical principle we have been speaking of here.

Structural (not symptomatic)

"Sustainable health care should take account of the structural causes of sickness and not deal only with the symptoms".

It is certainly clear from our earlier discussion of the changing political and economic context that sustainable health care is profoundly affected by what is occurring today in countries with limited resources, such as African countries. The structures of political participation and of economic distribution touch the life and the livelihood of every individual. Institutions and services of health care are themselves involved in the transitions taking place around them.

It is for this reason that Church-related sustainable health care must be guided by an ethical principle that recognises the deeper causes of sickness in society, especially sicknesses that affect the poor. Dr Paul Farmer, a physician and anthropologist at Harvard Medical School who has worked in rural Haiti, has argued that health care is ineffective in poor societies unless it addresses the deeper, poverty-related forces that are the root causes of many of the serious diseases on the increase, such as tuberculosis. If TB, for example, is viewed as an exclusively biological phenomenon, then available resources will be devoted to pharmaceutical and immunological research. If the problem is viewed primarily as one of patient compliance (e.g. whether or not medicine is taken, diet is followed, etc.) then plans will be made to change the patient's behaviour. But if a more serious structural analysis is done, and the poverty-related forces are identified (e.g. overcrowding, hunger, lack of education, inability to pay for drugs, etc.) then effective sustainable health care must also necessarily address these forces.

Dr Farmer's analysis is remarkably substantiated by the World Health Report 1995. According to WHO, "The world's biggest killer and the greatest cause of ill-health and suffering across the globe is... extreme poverty". And this poverty affects people in Zambia in a variety of ways. Let me give an example from Zambia. The UNICEF efforts to promote universal immunisation have been very successful in our country - a rate of 88 per cent for tuberculosis, for instance. But this rate has been falling off in the past year to two, as very poor parents have stayed away from clinics that now are changing user fees (because of SAP). Although the immunisations are free, they are associated in people's minds with clinics that charge fees for other services - and are avoided!

Health care cannot, of course, solve problems of poverty. The point I am making is that sustainable health care must be guided by a macro-ethical principle that recognises that sicknesses and ill health are in many instances caused by the deeper societal structures of poverty, inequity and injustice. It does not help to address only the symptoms; the structures must also be addressed.

Liberative (not dependency-building)

"Sustainable health care should be liberating to all those involved, health-care givers as well as receivers, and not build dependencies".

In countries with limited resources, one of the most serious challenges in the development process today is to avoid building bonds of dependency. A major critique offered in recent decades of "developmentalism" - the political-economic ideology espoused by many Northern countries and donor institutions - has been that it ignored the structural dependency existing in North-South relationships. Structures of trade, aid, investments, and monetary arrangements have all maintained the dominant influence of the rich countries.

These dependency relationships can, of course, also go on within and between organisations and between individuals. It is thus a challenge to design and implement relationships that are liberative and not dependency-building. This is true in the efforts of sustainable health care. On the level of individual interactions, it is important that the style of exchange between the health-care giver and receiver be such that people are empowered to build on their own ideas, to make new discoveries for themselves. The people must become actively responsible for their own and the community's health. To use the expression of Paulo Freire, people become subjects of their own development, not objects of someone else's efforts to develop them.

In Zambia, we make use of a popular development education approach called "Training for Transformation" that is based on Freirean methodology. Local communities build their own clinics; local health workers involve people in education, nutrition, sanitation, and environmental programmes. The

well-known handbook for village health care, *Where There Is No Doctor*, is another excellent example of promotion of a liberative health care approach.

There is also the sensitive issue of the dependency on out-side funding of Church-related health care efforts in countries of limited resources. This is surely an issue of importance for the members of this audience and for the CIDSE/CARITAS *Internationalis* sponsors. The dilemma is that without some outside assistance, much health care would be curtailed. Yet the question arises: does outside assistance build dependencies and also absolve local Governments, groups and individuals from their political and personal responsibilities? (This is not an academic question for me in Zambia, since I personally arrange for donations of much-needed medicines to be shipped from the United States to our mission hospitals that experience the constraints of severe national poverty). The African Synod message of last year made the point in general terms in a paragraph significantly entitled, "Examination of Conscience of the Churches in Africa", when it stated: "Our dignity demands that we do everything to bring about our financial self-reliance".

Conclusion

What I have attempted to do in this presentation is to provide an analysis of the context of political and economic transition; to offer a model of contextual theology based upon the compassion, personal involvement and institutional commitment shown by the Good Samaritan; and to suggest a set of macro-ethical guiding principles that emphasise a ministerial, holistic, structural and liberative approach.

I close where I opened, by repeating the message of the World Health Organisation: "The world's most ruthless killer and the greatest cause of suffering on earth is... extreme poverty". Can we of the Church find a role in the delivery of sustainable health care in such a world? Faithful to following the way of Jesus who said, "I have come that they may have life and have that life more abundantly" (Jh 10:10), we must seek our role humbly, wisely and courageously.

Ref: *Crossroads*, Christmas 1995, n. 149.

CONFUCIANISME ET ECONOMIE EN ASIE DE L'EST

- Réflexion chrétienne -

Noboru Yoshiyama

Depuis la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale, le Japon, Taiwan, Hongkong et Singapour ont réalisé des progrès économiques remarquables. Durant ces dix dernières années, la Thaïlande et la Malaisie aussi ont exercé une certaine influence sur les marchés mondiaux. Reconnaisant cette influence, les économistes les classent comme des "économies nouvellement industrialisées". La puissance économique du Japon et de Hongkong a maintenant atteint les marchés mondiaux au plus haut niveau.

Les progrès du Japon peuvent être attribués, au moins en partie, au fait qu'il a adopté une démocratie de style américain après la deuxième guerre mondiale. Parmi les pays à économie nouvellement industrialisée, le Japon est considéré comme le plus occidentalisé mais il est difficile de mesurer concrètement cette occidentalisation puisque la culture japonaise traditionnelle est encore très vivante.

Le confucianisme lie ensemble toutes les cultures de l'Asie de l'Est. La philosophie confucéenne est intimement liée aux caractères chinois classiques qui sont communs dans toute la région. L'influence confucéenne est immédiatement perceptible dans la culture contemporaine coréenne, particulièrement dans sa vie sociale et dans ses valeurs familiales et morales. Parce que les cultures nationales des pays à économie nouvellement industrialisée sont toutes fondées sur un confucianisme semblable à celui de la Corée qui a réussi, en un temps relativement court, à introduire un système économique de type occidental tout en continuant à adhérer à une éthique confucéenne traditionnelle, beaucoup d'économistes prédisent qu'elles vont se développer très rapidement. Certains experts comparent la relation entre le capitalisme et l'éthique protestante à la relation entre le développement du capitalisme dans les pays à économie nouvellement industrialisée et l'éthique confucéenne. Ces dix dernières années, des experts économiques, politiques et culturels ont discuté de cette hypothèse et le résultat en a été beaucoup d'excellentes études du confucianisme. Les journalistes s'y réfèrent comme à une "renaissance du confucianisme". Les intellectuels considèrent maintenant les pays de l'Asie de l'Est comme une entité culturelle autant que géographique.

LE CONFUCIANISME REINTERPRETE

Pour étudier l'Asie de l'Est non seulement en termes géographiques ou anthropologiques mais aussi en termes de philosophie et de culture afin de mieux comprendre les caractéristiques communes des peuples de l'Asie de l'Est, nous avons besoin d'une nouvelle conception du confucianisme. Ceci est d'une nécessité absolue si nous voulons arriver à inculquer notre évangélisation dans la région. Ces dernières décennies il y a eu beaucoup de travaux sur le confucianisme en Chine et au Japon. Ces études concernent généralement la signification réelle du confucianisme et son influence au Japon et en Chine dans les domaines de la gestion des entreprises, de la bio-éthique, des stratégies politiques, des études sociales, de la psychologie, de la philosophie de la vie et des comportements quotidiens en famille et en groupe. Les études récentes les plus complètes concernent les relations du confucianisme et de la religion. Généralement considéré comme une philosophie, le confucianisme établit des principes de conduite sociale qui concernent la morale de la famille en tant que groupe social. Il est regrettable qu'on ait négligé l'étude du confucianisme du point de vue de la religion. Une étude chrétienne du confucianisme est aussi nécessaire afin d'examiner la conception chrétienne de la morale et comprendre les différences entre la morale chrétienne et la sorte de morale de loi naturelle que l'on trouve en Chine. Une autre raison est que cette nouvelle manière de regarder le confucianisme est nécessaire au programme d'évangélisation de l'Asie du nord-est. Un dialogue amical avec les moralistes confucéens est impératif dans un avenir proche.

Le confucianisme est né en Chine cinq ou six siècles avant le Christ. L'histoire de la Chine révèle une civilisation qui comportait une expérience religieuse de type animiste. Confucius n'était pas un leader religieux "illuminé" comme le Bouddha. Il s'est plutôt occupé d'organiser la vie politique chinoise

et d'enseigner le comportement humain correct qui s'est incorporé dans la culture nationale. Inspiré par l'animisme plutôt que par un mysticisme religieux, Confucius a enseigné un culte de respect pour les ancêtres. Fondamentalement il était un philosophe dont la philosophie s'est développée à travers l'étude de la langue chinoise. Il collectait les vieux poèmes et les dires des sages anciens. Au lieu de discuter d'expériences animistes, il méditait l'aspect humain de la poésie. Il n'a jamais déprécié la piété religieuse mais il a mis l'accent sur l'étude de l'humanité en tant que telle. Ainsi sa philosophie était une anthropologie essentiellement humaniste. C'est comme cela qu'il est arrivé à un système éthique universel pour les différents peuples de Chine. En termes de politique, il a enseigné le respect d'une hiérarchie de vertus morales. Le politicien doit surtout être vertueux et respecter le culte des ancêtres.

Si nous cherchons une vision métaphysique dans sa philosophie nous trouverons un respect fondamental pour la vie humaine. Sa dévotion pour le culte des ancêtres était basée sur l'instinct vital humain. Il a ainsi encouragé la piété filiale comme une vertu fondamentale et son code de bonne conduite était dérivé d'une morale de type familial qui mettait l'accent sur le bien commun du groupe et de la famille plutôt que sur le bien de l'individu. Selon Confucius, la piété filiale était essentielle dans une société humaine et pour l'harmonie de toutes les formes de vie dans l'univers. Ancêtres et rois étaient les symboles de l'énergie vitale. Cette nouvelle interprétation de la pensée de Confucius éclaire quelque peu l'histoire du confucianisme en Chine. Le Dr Nobuyuki Kaji explique schématiquement les éléments du confucianisme d'un point de vue historique.

1-Avant Confucius

Le chamanisme et les pratiques chamanistes étaient basées sur le culte des ancêtres.

2-L'ience de Confucius (600 av. JC)

L'utilisation systématique par Confucius des pratiques chamanistes était évident dans la liturgie et le comportement. Il a codifié la tradition du culte des ancêtres en quatre catégories: poésie, histoire, liturgie et musique. Il était un homme de vertu, un intellectuel, un homme de lettres avec un amour particulier de la poésie et de la musique. Bien que n'étant pas chaman lui-même il respectait les pratiques chamanistes. En tant que philosophe, il a créé un code de conduite pour la famille et les philosophes politiques et fondé un système éthique, moral et politique, qui dure et exprime la pensée chinoise.

3-Systématisation du confucianisme (après 200 av. Jc)

Avec la centralisation du pouvoir politique, les disciples de Confucius ont développé sa pensée de manière plus systématique. Quelques-uns d'entre eux ont approfondi les aspects métaphysiques de la pensée confucéenne alors que d'autres ont élargi ses idées sur la cosmologie. Le résultat en est que le confucianisme est resté une force dynamique pour la morale et la politique pendant deux mille ans d'histoire de la Chine. La religion chinoise cependant n'a pas été beaucoup transformée par le confucianisme. Même le bouddhisme n'a pas été capable d'incer les valeurs religieuses chinoises traditionnelles et l'animisme continue d'exister.

4-Le présent et l'avenir du confucianisme

Le confucianisme qui est un élément tellement fondamental de l'esprit chinois est encore aujourd'hui très vivant dans le peuple chinois. Il a survécu à beaucoup de périodes historiques critiques et même les communistes n'ont pas pu le détruire complètement. Pourtant, il y a des aspects du confucianisme qui sont critiquables. En ce qui concerne l'avenir, certains intellectuels voudraient que ses doctrines soient intériorisées. Le confucianisme est plus puissant que le taoïsme ou le bouddhisme chinois. Dans la période post-industrielle, le confucianisme pourrait offrir une inspiration et une vision nouvelles du comportement humain. Des sociologues et d'autres ont certainement raison d'appeler à un renouveau du confucianisme pour les temps modernes.

COMMENT LE CONFUCIANISME CONTRIBUE-T-IL AU DEVELOPPEMENT ECONOMIQUE?

L'une des raisons fondamentales pour lesquelles le confucianisme peut contribuer au développement économique se trouve dans l'attitude religieuse des Chinois vis-à-vis du monde. Pour des pays animistes, le monde naturel ou le monde des êtres humains n'est pas seulement important pour les vivants mais aussi pour les morts (c'est-à-dire les âmes des ancêtres) qui peuvent revenir dans ce monde pour être vénérés ou aimés par les vivants. Le culte des ancêtres n'est pas simplement une cérémonie de

souvenir des jours anciens. C'est une expérience de communion avec les morts de la famille. Pour la communion, la famille a besoin d'être suffisamment prospère pour que la rencontre avec le mort soit joyeuse. Si la famille est fidèle à respecter ses morts, elle sera protégée par les ancêtres pour sept générations (environ 231 ans). «PL64»En conséquence, la famille a besoin d'être unie autour d'une autorité que tous les membres de la famille reconnaissent. Le code originel était donc essentiellement pour la famille. Les Chinois ont une attitude positive par rapport au monde. Pour eux, la Chine est le centre du monde et une terre qui promet le bonheur humain. Cette manière de voir fait partie de leur fierté nationale. Pour les Chinois, les activités économiques ne sont jamais méprisables. L'obtention de richesses matérielles est l'un des buts de la vie au moins dans la mesure où elles aident au culte des ancêtres. Pour eux, le bonheur en ce monde est le fruit de la bénédiction des ancêtres.

Depuis la révolution industrielle le confucianisme a subi beaucoup de critiques. Il n'est plus aujourd'hui regardé comme opposé au progrès moderne. En fait les pays à économies nouvellement industrialisées, se sont rapidement développés sans avoir à rejeter le confucianisme et son code moral pratique. Des questions ont été soulevées sur la contribution possible du confucianisme au développement économique des pays nouvellement développés. Le Japon, qui est déjà un pays très développé, n'a pas encore pleinement évalué la part due au confucianisme dans son progrès économique. Beaucoup ont l'impression que le miracle économique japonais est dû à son adoption d'un système démocratique occidental. Libérés de l'humanisme traditionnel enraciné dans le confucianisme, possédant maintenant davantage de liberté et d'identité individuelles, les Japonais seraient donc capables de plus de créativité. Beaucoup de Japonais pensent que leur succès économique est dû à leur abandon du code confucéen de comportement. Pourtant une large part du progrès accompli peut être attribuée aux Japonais travaillant en groupe plutôt qu'individuellement.

En Corée du Sud, où les citoyens ont conservé leurs traditions confucéennes, le développement économique et industriel a été presque aussi étonnant qu'au Japon. Au cours de la dernière décennie, cependant, plutôt que de s'adapter au style individualiste occidental, les compagnies japonaises ont préféré adhérer aux idéaux et principes anciens du confucianisme dans leurs relations humaines et leurs principes de gestion. Même si beaucoup de capitalistes japonais ont jugé utile d'adopter certains principes occidentaux. A l'heure actuelle, à cause des différences de tradition et de culture, il existe entre le Japon et les Etats-Unis, le Japon et l'Europe, une confusion et un malentendu importants dans le domaine de l'économie. Cette situation exige de toutes les parties de se montrer plus tolérantes et patientes. La grande question demeure: est-il nécessaire d'occidentaliser complètement le Japon pour maintenir de bonnes relations avec l'Occident et réussir le progrès économique? Les Japonais doivent-ils abandonner toutes leurs bonnes traditions? Beaucoup de sociologues de l'ère post-industrielle sont critiques de l'accent occidental placé sur l'individu souvent au détriment de la vie de famille. Daniel Bell, dans son livre "Les contradictions culturelles du capitalisme" (1976), propose la théorie d'une "famille publique" pour la société américaine contemporaine. Ses lecteurs en majorité n'ont pas réellement accepté cette idée. En fait, même certains sociologues japonais ne sont pas d'accord avec la haute estime dans laquelle Bell tient le système japonais de la famille traditionnelle et un ordre social qui contrôle strictement les tendances individualistes pour favoriser les groupes sociaux et la sécurité nationale. Le bien-être du groupe prend le dessus sur le bien-être de l'individu. Les discussions continuent entre sociologues américains et japonais sur ce qui constitue une individualité authentique pour les Japonais. Le défi posé est celui de pouvoir trouver un équilibre heureux.

Dans beaucoup de pays démocratiques occidentaux, particulièrement aux Etats-Unis, il y a une dépréciation importante des valeurs familiales, de la sécurité et des valeurs morales en général. Au Japon les croyances traditionnelles semblent encore avoir l'avantage et, en dépit de ses défauts, le confucianisme maintient un idéal humaniste universel compatible avec un mode de vie chrétien.

CONFUCIANISME ET BOUDDHISME POUR LES DIRIGEANTS JAPONAIS DANS LES DOMAINES POLITIQUE ET ECONOMIQUE

L'acceptation du bouddhisme par la Chine a toujours fasciné les chercheurs. Selon les historiens confucéens, la Chine ne s'est jamais convertie complètement au bouddhisme. C'est plutôt le confucianisme chinois qui a assimilé le bouddhisme pour améliorer le mode de vie confucéen. Nous le savons maintenant, Confucius lui-même ne s'est jamais intéressé à une étude métaphysique de l'être ultime ou dans une autre vie. Les intellectuels confucéens n'ont jamais montré aucun intérêt dans la morale de salut du bouddhisme. Le confucianisme des temps primitifs était essentiellement un mode de vie pour ce monde-ci et non pas un moyen de transcender le présent.

Il est impossible pour un disciple de Confucius d'abandonner ce monde-ci pour rechercher l'"illumination". Ceci devient très clair quand on observe des capitalistes japonais qui s'intéressent à la méditation zen. Par exemple, Yasuhiro Nakasone, ancien premier ministre, ou encore Tshimitsu Doko avaient l'habitude de pratiquer la méditation zen tous les jours. M. Nakasone et M. Doko avaient beaucoup de fidèles désirant devenir des dirigeants politiques ou économiques. Ils ne faisaient sûrement pas cela pour atteindre l'objectif bouddhiste de la vie dans un autre monde. Ils désiraient plutôt sincèrement devenir de bons dirigeants et réussir dans leurs domaines respectifs d'activité en ce monde-ci, dans une société démocratique japonaise très développée. Ils étaient convaincus que leur succès dans la réalisation d'un monde idéal dépendait de leur capacité à dépasser les désirs égoïstes.

Des sociologues contemporains américains, parmi lesquels Daniel Bell et Robert Bellah, essaient de trouver une nouvelle synthèse entre les droits de l'individu et le bien de la communauté. Ils veulent retrouver les valeurs transcendantales du christianisme afin de trouver une solution à la crise communautaire de la société américaine et afin de restaurer une véritable démocratie.

En ce qui les concerne, les intellectuels d'Asie de l'Est étudient le confucianisme non seulement dans son aspect religieux mais aussi pour en retrouver les valeurs morales et sociales. Dans cette perspective, il est clair que les enseignements de Confucius conviennent mieux que les doctrines bouddhistes, mais que le fondement religieux du confucianisme est un sujet important qui mérite une recherche plus approfondie. Les cadres japonais, jeunes et vieux, étudient beaucoup la doctrine du "détachement" si fondamentale au bouddhisme. Par exemple, Hannya Shingyo (le sutra du coeur), enseignement pratique et plutôt court de cette doctrine, est très populaire parmi les hommes d'affaires. Ils étudient ses enseignements comme une prière quotidienne. Quelques-uns pratiquent aussi l'écriture de ce sutra avec un pinceau afin de méditer plus pleinement son sens profond. Est-ce que cela veut dire qu'ils veulent se détacher complètement du bonheur de ce monde? Pas du tout. Ils méditent sur la philosophie du "détachement" afin de parvenir à une bonne position dans leur compagnie ou de concentrer toute leur attention et leur énergie pour le bénéfice de leurs compagnies respectives. Pour certains hommes d'affaires, c'est une morale du salut.

Dans le renouveau du bouddhisme au Japon après la deuxième guerre mondiale, la secte peut-être la plus importante a été le mouvement Sokkagakai. Le pouvoir politique au Japon a été très influencé par les membres du Komeito, la branche politique du Sokkagakai. Les électeurs qui avaient rejeté le modèle occidental de parti socialiste parce qu'il était influencé par le marxisme, ont accepté ce parti politique. Peut-être à cause de son caractère plus religieux ou culturel, le renouveau du bouddhisme zen n'a pas été aussi populaire que le mouvement Sokkagakai. La méditation zen est populaire chez les artistes et les intellectuels et est utilisée dans le but de contrer le nihilisme moderne dans les pays développés. La mentalité post-moderne au Japon est tout aussi nihiliste que celle des pays européens et elle se révèle clairement dans les activités culturelles de la jeunesse japonaise contemporaine. Le nihilisme chez les intellectuels japonais peut être empêché par la doctrine bouddhiste du "détachement" ou par la conception confucéenne de la morale. A l'origine, les Japonais ont intégré le bouddhisme dans une religion animiste, le shintoïsme, et dans une morale confucéenne. Nous trouvons la même tendance aujourd'hui dans le renouveau du bouddhisme japonais.

On ne trouve pas aujourd'hui au Japon un renouveau réel du confucianisme classique. Ce que nous trouvons plutôt est simplement la résurrection de la religion animiste qui forme la base commune du confucianisme historique. Il ne fait aucun doute que le confucianisme continuera d'exercer son influence pendant encore longtemps. Ma question est la suivante: le christianisme peut-il inculturer les traditions religieuses animistes de l'Asie de l'Est? Les missionnaires chrétiens font une évaluation honnête et sincère de ce qui a été fait dans le passé dans ce domaine, et étudient les moyens de ce qui peut être fait à l'avenir. L'évangélisation des cultures est pour l'Église catholique aujourd'hui l'une des tâches majeures.

La mort cérébrale

Bien que le Japon soit parmi les pays les plus avancés dans le domaine de la bio-technologie et de la médecine, il éprouve beaucoup de difficulté à accepter la mort cérébrale comme critère pour décider du moment réel de la mort. En conséquence, le Japon est réticent à encourager les transplantations d'organes. Le gouvernement veut soutenir le principe de l'ablation des organes au moment de la mort cérébrale, mais les avocats et cinquante pour cent de la population s'opposent à cette idée. La raison fondamentale en est l'attitude traditionnelle par rapport à la mort et aux relations familiales. La transplantation d'organes quand le cerveau est mort mais que le coeur bat encore est, pour beaucoup de Japonais un manque de respect pour les morts. Selon l'enseignement de Confucius, un élément important du culte des ancêtres est que le corps doit être conservé dans son intégralité et enterré dans un cimetière afin de pouvoir rejoindre les ancêtres. Sans ce respect pour le corps, le lien vital avec les ancêtres est

perturbé. La théorie confucéenne de l'instinct de vie est importante autant pour les morts que pour les vivants. Cette doctrine n'est pas seulement reliée à la biologie, elle a aussi des connotations religieuses. La conception confucéenne de la piété filiale maintient le lien avec les ancêtres décédés mais se préoccupe aussi des vivants et des morts et est un signe de respect pour la pérennité de la vie. En d'autres mots, la piété filiale vénère l'instinct de vie et est réellement un acte religieux animiste. Nous pouvons alors commencer à comprendre la conception des relations humaines dans le confucianisme et voir à quel point elle est belle. L'individualité ou la personnalité sont secondaires dans l'idée confucéenne d'instinct de vie dans laquelle la vie d'un individu est plus qu'une préoccupation personnelle.

La vie humaine doit être respectée pour sa valeur collective telle qu'elle existe dans les groupes familiaux, les clans etc. On pourrait dire que nous sommes formés par ceux qui sont partis avant nous. Cette conception de la personne est différente de celle que l'on trouve dans la Bible. Dans la Bible, l'être humain a une valeur unique parce que Dieu parle personnellement à chacun individuellement. Cette conception est évidente dans l'alliance de Dieu avec la race humaine. Les Japonais occidentalisés ne comprennent pas pleinement l'idée chrétienne de respect pour la personne humaine. Que les individus eux-mêmes décident, de leur propre initiative, de la manière de régler les problèmes de la vie et de la mort, dénote un manque de respect pour les membres de la famille qui sont morts avant eux. La qualité de la vie ne peut pas être considérée simplement à partir d'un point de vue subjectif ou affectif. Les problèmes de la vie et de la mort concernent le bien-être de toute la communauté avec ses centaines ou même ses milliers d'années de traditions, de cultes et de rites. C'est la raison pour laquelle le gouvernement japonais ne force pas à une législation concernant la mort cérébrale puisque l'on dit que la mort cérébrale est seulement le commencement de la mort. Le gouvernement écoute les voix de ceux qui sont formés par des centaines d'années de tradition. Le confucianisme assure des rails de sécurité contre toute interprétation douteuse du sens de la vie et de la mort.

Cette conception de la mort cérébrale et de la transplantation des organes a fait prendre conscience à la présente génération de Japonais de leurs modes de pensée traditionnels et confucéens que beaucoup d'occidentaux estimaient avoir disparu dans le progrès technologique et scientifique. Quelques intellectuels, opposés à l'idée que la mort cérébrale soit le critère de la vie, de la mort et de la transplantation d'organes, disent qu'il est intéressant de constater que beaucoup de Japonais réaffirment aujourd'hui leur identité traditionnelle. Cette réaction n'est certainement pas due au nationalisme. Elle a plutôt à voir avec un choc culturel. Le moment est venu pour les Japonais de dialoguer avec les cultures occidentale, islamique, juive etc. afin de préserver et de protéger ce qu'ils croient à propos du respect de la vie. Ces différences peuvent avoir une certaine importance si l'on veut confronter le problème de l'évangélisation des cultures. Il est très important pour nous de continuer l'étude de la bio-éthique et de l'interculturalité dans les diverses cultures du monde. Comment les Japonais considéreront-ils la mort cérébrale à l'avenir? Si nous étudions l'histoire du confucianisme en Chine, nous trouvons que les enseignements confucéens ont survécu parce qu'ils prenaient en compte d'abord les intérêts de la nation, le bien de l'ensemble, avant de prendre en compte l'individu. Les Chinois ont démontré une capacité exceptionnelle d'adaptation du monde qui leur était connu lors de chaque crise de leur longue histoire. Les sages confucéens n'étaient pas seulement des penseurs adonnés à la spéculation, mais des hommes pratiques engagés dans les affaires économiques et la politique. Pendant des siècles, ils ont fait confiance à leur ruse et à leur ténacité afin de survivre sur la terre dont ils sont fiers, le pays qu'ils appellent Chine et qui est pour eux le centre du monde.

Les Japonais, consciemment ou inconsciemment, sont encore iencés par la pensée confucéenne sur la vie et sur la mort d'un être humain. Quelques traditionalistes offrent déjà une solution confucéenne au problème. Ceux qui s'opposent à la reconnaissance de la mort cérébrale comme moment de la mort et par conséquent à la transplantation d'organes vivants, insistent pour dire que, avant de procéder à l'ablation des organes pour la transplantation, on doit faire de preuve de respect pour le corps en faisant une cérémonie, peut-être avec un prêtre bouddhiste, célébrant le culte des ancêtres. Ce que les traditionalistes détestent avant tout, c'est l'apparent manque de respect pour le mourant dans l'organisation hautement technologique des hôpitaux d'aujourd'hui. Ils ont le sentiment que les relations entre docteurs, infirmières et patients doivent s'approfondir et se développer qualitativement. Ils estiment aussi qu'il y a besoin de consultation réelle de tous les membres de la famille concernée et que les consentements informés ou présumés doivent être surveillés attentivement. Ils rejettent l'idée de "consentement informé" qui, à leurs yeux, n'est qu'une explication médicale qui ne montre que peu ou pas de respect pour le corps humain. Ils estiment que le "consentement informé" n'est rien de plus que le moyen de justifier une opération médicale.

L'humanisme confucéen est essentiellement un type communautaire de respect pour la famille, le clan, la nation. Par conséquent, l'acceptation de la mort cérébrale comme critère de décès, et donc la possibilité de transplantation des organes, ne seront possibles que quand de nouvelles relations familiales

seront reconnues et que le progrès médical sera justifié. En même temps que la sagesse du progrès scientifique moderne et le progrès économique de l'Asie de l'Est, l'idéal confucéen devrait certainement être maintenu. Le bouddhisme et le christianisme n'ont pas d'objections sérieuses au critère de la mort cérébrale. Ils encouragent même la transplantation d'organes comme une oeuvre charitable.

Parmi les diverses religions japonaises, le shintoïsme en particulier est fortement opposé au critère de la mort cérébrale et à la transplantation des organes. Mais, tout comme les bouddhistes, les disciples du shinto accepteront à l'avenir un éventuel enseignement confucéen. Voici un exemple tiré de l'histoire japonaise: l'empereur au Japon a toujours agi comme un chaman dans la liturgie impériale, rôle important pour l'unité nationale du Japon. On lui a aussi donné un rôle politique sur le modèle de l'empereur de Chine. De la même manière, le problème de la mort cérébrale, grâce à la dynamique d'adaptation confucéenne et grâce aux traditionalistes japonais, trouvera une solution qui satisfait la plupart des gens.

Depuis plus d'un siècle le Japon a été ouvert à la culture occidentale. Après la deuxième guerre mondiale, le Japon s'est ouvert spécialement à la technologie et à la science occidentales. A tous les niveaux, le Japon a subi l'influence de l'Occident. Aujourd'hui, tout comme les autres pays développés de l'Occident, le Japon doit dépasser la modernité pour que ses citoyens puissent vivre en véritables êtres humains. Il n'y a pas de modèle préexistant pour cette nouvelle manière de vivre. Afin de définir un modèle et sans nier les bénéfices de la culture occidentale, qui sont évidents dans la vie quotidienne, les intellectuels japonais cherchent à dialoguer avec les cultures japonaises traditionnelles, le shintoïsme, le bouddhisme et le confucianisme. La question de la mort cérébrale est significative dans cette perspective. Les pays de l'Asie de l'Est font face au même problème à l'heure actuelle et recherchent des solutions qui soient cohérentes avec leur propre culture et religion.

Religions animistes et christianisme

La raison pour laquelle le confucianisme est reconnu comme une force morale dynamique même dans les pays post-industriels de l'Asie de l'Est se tient dans son origine animiste. Une religion animiste ou un code moral sont toujours attrayants quand l'environnement naturel est en danger. Au Japon, des chercheurs étudient avec grand intérêt l'éthique de l'environnement que l'on trouve dans la morale religieuse animiste de la minorité aïnou. Les intellectuels japonais perdent de l'intérêt pour le monothéisme occidental et la morale humaniste. Ils considèrent les cultures occidentales, et spécialement leur culture de l'information dans une société de consommation, comme aliénant les personnes d'elles-mêmes et de leur humanité.

Une fois occidentalisé, un Japonais ne peut pas revenir facilement à une religion animiste et à sa morale comme vérité ultime sans conserver de préjugé contre un naturalisme qui n'est rien de plus qu'une somme de données écologiques. Ceux qui préfèrent l'animisme au christianisme ne sont évidemment pas satisfaits de la définition doctrinale d'un Dieu suprême telle qu'elle est présentée par la philosophie occidentale des Lumières. C'est aussi une réaction au manque de spiritualité du mode de vie occidental. Si les gens arrivent à trouver dans le confucianisme, avec son arrière-plan animiste, une cohérence rationnelle de points de vue animistes, ils recommenceront certainement à apprécier le confucianisme. Il est temps pour le christianisme de développer davantage les doctrines de la création et de l'incarnation afin d'évangéliser les peuples qui possèdent une mentalité animiste traditionnelle. En ce qui concerne les cultures animistes de l'Asie de l'est, les missionnaires pourraient annoncer l'Évangile comme salut non pas seulement pour les êtres humains mais aussi comme un guide pour protéger le monde naturel. Ce serait une manière d'inculquer l'évangélisation en Asie de l'est. Jusqu'à présent, les missionnaires chrétiens ont annoncé un Dieu personnel sans faire allusion à l'environnement naturel, sa vie animale et les autres formes de nature. Il y a eu une condamnation excessive des pratiques animistes comme étant idolâtres. Cette présentation de l'Évangile est trop simple. En ce qui concerne l'amour chrétien, l'accent a été mis sur une relation personnelle au monde naturel sans lien avec l'amour de Dieu. Dans le confucianisme l'enseignement de l'amour commence avec un code pour toute l'humanité. L'idéal de l'amour est le respect de la vie des citoyens dans la famille, le group ou la communauté. On est loin de l'esclavage ou de l'obéissance aveugle à l'autorité politique. Le principe fondamental de la piété filiale est basé non pas sur l'énergie personnelle propre mais plus particulièrement sur l'instinct de vie ancestral, c'est-à-dire l'énergie qui vient de ceux qui sont partis avant.

La société ne devrait pas être simplement un système ordonné de relations humaines. Ce doit être une communauté de vie recevant énergie et autorité des ancêtres qui symbolisent la continuité de la vie. N'est-il pas possible pour le Christ, Dieu incarné, d'advenir à la communauté pour renforcer sa vie d'abord, avant qu'une unité personnelle ne soit atteinte par les membres individuels de la communauté? Le type de salut individualiste n'est pas nécessairement chrétien de manière authentique. Le concile Vatican

Il a pleinement pris conscience de l'importance de la communauté dans la vie de l'Église et du monde aujourd'hui. Le document papal *Centesimus Annus* insiste sur la solidarité comme étant une vertu chrétienne authentique. Oublier qui est notre prochain et qui sont nos voisins sur cette petite planète peut amener au pire des individualismes.

Les sociologues et politologues occidentaux sont en train de ré-évaluer la morale confucéenne pour le développement économique de l'Asie de l'est. En même temps, des intellectuels asiatiques, particulièrement Japonais, critiquent la technologie et la culture occidentales, en même temps que le christianisme. Les missionnaires ont la responsabilité d'annoncer un évangile authentique qui inclut les gens, les autres créatures vivantes et la nature inanimée. Déjà, des études récentes sur la pensée chinoise suggèrent une nouvelle orientation pour l'expression théologique de l'Évangile dans l'inculturation de l'évangélisation.

Robert Bellah, sociologue des religions, essaie de trouver un niveau transcendantal qui serait présent dans toutes les croyances religieuses. Dans son dernier livre, *Au-delà de la croyance, essais sur la religion dans un monde post-traditionnel*, nous trouvons une étude comparative des aspects fondamentaux du confucianisme et du christianisme. Un chapitre concerne le concept de famille. Il y compare la relation du père et du fils dans les deux religions pour montrer la différence entre la culture chinoise et la tradition occidentale. Pour les théologiens chrétiens, ceci peut suggérer un nouveau paradigme pour le mystère de la Trinité.

Le monothéisme biblique interprété par la pensée occidentale doit être ré-évalué afin de dépasser l'argument simpliste qui oppose le monothéisme au panthéisme. Cette tâche requiert une attention immédiate si l'on veut que l'inculturation du message chrétien sur Dieu prenne racine. Les occidentaux pensent que l'immanence est une caractéristique essentielle de la pensée chinoise alors que la transcendance serait fondamentale pour les penseurs occidentaux. Une étude récente propose une nouvelle interprétation de cette manière sclérosée de penser: Robert C. Neville observe que "*selon la catégorie de la créativité ontologique, toute définition des choses est immanente dans le sens qu'elle est harmonisation entre des traits conditionnels relationnels et d'autres intégraux essentiels: aucune définition de chose ne se réfère à un créateur transcendant. En même temps, il n'y a pas symétrie dans le statut existentiel des choses*" (Comprendre la pensée chinoise, p. 60). Ces exemples parmi beaucoup d'autres sur la pensée chinoise nous invitent, nous théologiens chrétiens concernés, à approfondir notre pensée théologique avec un nouveau paradigme.

CONCLUSION

Ce que je propose dans cet essai est de regarder l'Asie de l'est non seulement comme une région géographique mais particulièrement comme une unité culturelle. L'existence d'une culture et d'un héritage confucéens dans la majorité des peuples d'Asie de l'est est évident. La prise de conscience que cette culture existe dans ces peuples les amènera naturellement à un sentiment plus profond de solidarité.

Comprendre les peuples par leur culture est plus important que d'essayer de les comprendre par leur anthropologie ou leur position géographique sur une carte du monde. C'est la raison pour laquelle je crois que l'évangélisation à l'avenir exigera des missionnaires un effort sérieux d'inculturation. Le confucianisme comme héritage culturel commun des peuples d'Asie de l'est doit être sérieusement étudié en dépit des préjugés populaires contre les idées morales confucéennes. L'hypothèse d'une relation effective entre le confucianisme et le développement économique des pays nouvellement industrialisés n'a pas été scientifiquement démontré. Beaucoup d'intellectuels confucéens ne sont pas favorables à cette idée mais beaucoup de journalistes et d'hommes politiques considèrent l'hypothèse comme probable. Dans tous les cas, cette théorie stimule fortement la recherche qui se fait sur les relations entre le confucianisme et l'économie. L'interprétation que je viens de présenter est l'un des aspects les plus importants de la recherche récente sur le confucianisme.

Grâce à sa spiritualité sophistiquée, le bouddhisme peut être séduisant. Il en résulte que beaucoup d'intellectuels catholiques étudient sérieusement la philosophie du bouddhisme et pratiquent même ses exercices spirituels. D'un autre côté, les éléments religieux du confucianisme, particulièrement son aspect animiste, sont totalement négligés ou méprisés.

Les intellectuels s'intéressent seulement à la superstructure morale du confucianisme comme s'il s'agissait d'une espèce sophistiquée de morale. Le confucianisme n'est pas simplement, comme le bouddhisme, un système d'idées raffinées. C'est plutôt un type d'humanisme intégré et cohérent dans la mentalité des peuples de l'Asie de l'est.

Depuis Vatican II, la théologie morale comme les autres disciplines théologiques connaît un renouveau. Beaucoup affirment que la théologie morale en Asie de l'est devrait être contextualisée ou inculturée. Pour ma part, j'attends avec impatience une nouvelle manière de penser et de faire la théologie morale qui aiderait davantage à la prise de décision dans notre contexte culturel particulier, comme John Mahoney l'a suggéré dans ses écrits sur la réforme des traditions de la théologie morale en Occident. Pour accomplir notre tâche dans notre petit coin du monde, j'aimerais inviter nos collègues américains et européens à nous aider dans un esprit fraternel de coopération et de soutien intellectuel et moral.

Ref.: *Églises D'Asie*, Septembre 1995.

IMAGES OF JESUS IN INDIA

Michael Amaladoss, SJ

Christological reflection starts with the faith experience of the living Christ. Though "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever" (Heb 13:8), our experience varies according to the person who experiences him and the social-context of the experience. The experience of a mystic is different from the experience of an ordinary Christian. Sometimes even members of other religions claim an experience of Christ. The social context is the life-situation in which Christ comes as the Saviour. In India three elements of this context are important: India is a poor country weighed down with various kinds of inequalities; it is characterised by a passionate search for the Absolute at various levels; it is multi-religious, leading to a clash of Absolutes. The cultural background provides the media-language, world-view, philosophy, images and symbols - through which the person is able to understand and reflect on the experience. In this manner there are many factors that contribute to a differentiation of Christological reflection.

While this pluralism in Christological reflection seems evident to us today, it was not so in the past. Christian missionaries not only proclaimed Christ, but also imposed a theology considered universal. Robert de Nobili was open to Indian culture as a way of life and as a medium for translating the truths of the faith. But he was polemical with regard to Indian religions. However, for over a hundred years now, Indians have tried to experience Christ and to express and reflect over their experience. I shall focus on these efforts and then suggest a possible way in which they could enrich Christological reflection. This would also offer an occasion for some methodological observations.

Before proceeding, however, I have an important preliminary remark. One cannot think of India without thinking of religious pluralism. One is then led to a theology of religions. In the context of such a theology, the Christological reflection tends to focus on the question of the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ as Saviour. While I recognise the importance of this problem, I am not focussing on it here. It is not specifically an Indian (nor even an Asian) problem. There is certainly an Indian perspective on it. That will necessarily come through as we explore how the Indians, in their multi-religious context, have experienced Jesus. But my primary attention will be on the impact and significance that Jesus has had on Indians. The multi-religious context emerges as a question at a second level of reflection and is better kept at that level.

In giving an account of the Indian experience of Jesus I shall try to be typological and representative rather than exhaustive or historical. I shall also try to avoid too many Indian words and concepts. They are not really necessary for our purpose.

The Christian Experience

Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya (1861-1907) called himself a Hindu-Christian: Hindu with regard to culture and Christian with regard to religion. He tried to live and speak about this difficult synthesis. He was deeply Christian. But he felt that Indian philosophy, especially that of Sankara, should replace Greek philosophy as the medium of expression for and reflection on Christian faith in India. He used the term *Saccidananda - Sat-Cit-Ananda* (Truth-Consciousness-Bliss) - to refer to the Trinity and strongly affirmed the divinity of Jesus by identifying Him with Cit. He rejected the popular Indian term *avatara* to refer to the incarnation, though many others were to use it later with varying meanings. He tried to explain the personal unity of Jesus by using the framework of Indian psychology. His hymn to Jesus is worth quoting in full as indicative of much of Indian tradition in the matter.

The transcendent Image of Brahman,
Blossomed and mirrored in the full-to-overflowing
Eternal Intelligence -
Victory to God, the God-man.

Child of the pure Virgin,
Guide of the Universe, infinite in Being

Yet beautiful with relations,
Victory to God, the God-Man.

Ornament of the Assembly
Of saints and sages, Destroyer of fear,
Chastiser of the Spirit of Evil -
Victory to God, the God-Man.
Dispeller of weakness
Of soul and body, pouring out life for others,
Whose deeds are holy,
Victory to God, the God-Man.

Priest and Offerer
Of his own soul in agony, whose Life is Sacrifice,
Destroyer of sin's poison, -
Victory to God, the God-Man.
Tender, beloved,
Soothe of the human heart, Ointment of the eyes,
Vanquisher of fierce death, -
Victory to God, the God-Man.

The hymn will have to be heard in Sanskrit to catch all the allusions to Indian tradition and the resonance of Indian terminology like *Cit*, *Hari*, *Brahman*, *Saguna*, *Nirguna*, etc. It is a litany of evocative symbols and attributes, that make at the same time a theological point. It is the fruit of a dialogue between two philosophical traditions but in deep and conscious fidelity to a single tradition of faith and even of dogma. *Brahmabandab* may be said to represent the *inana marga* (the way of knowledge) tradition.

A.J. Appasamy (1891 -) preferred the *bhakti marga* (the way of devotion or love). He had no difficulty in seeing Jesus as an *avatara*, though as the only true one. The *avatara* tradition is best described by the Bhagavad Gita:

Whenever there is a decline of law and an outbreak of lawlessness, I incarnate myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of the law, I am born from age to age (IV: 7-8).

For the Christian believer, of course, Jesus is the *only avatara*: God become Man. Appasamy also saw Christ as the *antaryamin*, the 'indweller' in the heart of everyone, though others would use this term to refer more directly to the Spirit.

The Christian *bhakti* tradition, based on a personal experience of love, evokes many other relational images. *H.A. Krishna Pillai* (1827-1900) sings of Christ as the river of life (*Ganga*) from heaven, the mountain of salvation, the ocean of bliss, the cloud that showers the rain of grace, life-giving medicine, gem of gems, and mother.

In form the peerless Mother of all good deeds
And all worthy to be praised.

The image of the mother is also used by *Narayan Vaman Tilak* (1862-1919):

Tenderest Mother - Guru mine,
Saviour, where is love like Thine?

More recently Christian believers increasingly see Jesus as the Liberator. One could see them, in the Indian tradition, as opting for the *karma marga* (the way of action). Jesus identifies Himself with the poor and the outcaste in order to struggle with them towards inner and outer freedom and wholeness. The salvation that Jesus brings is not merely other-worldly, but challenges us to a commitment to promote social development and liberation. Jesus offers not only a motivation to struggle, but also a model. First of all He sets the goal of development and liberation in the context of the Reign of God. Secondly, his struggle is non-violent. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, Jesus is the perfect Satyagrahi. The term Sat, meaning Truth and Being, to which one is passionately attached (*grahi*), indicates the fullness of Reality, Brahman. It stands for the Father in the Trinitarian term *Saccidananda*. Thus the pursuit of liberation is set in the context of the quest and realisation of God.

The Hindu Experience

This may be the place to refer briefly to the way that Hindus have experienced Jesus in India. In the background of the *avatara* doctrine referred to above, they have no difficulty in accepting Jesus as an *avatara*, as a manifestation of God on earth. They admire his teachings. They appreciate his religious experience. Some will be ready to take Him as their *Guru* or spiritual master. They see Him as one of the humans, like the Buddha, who has realised the full potentialities of divinity hidden in each person, and as such He is a way and a model to follow. It is not rare to see a picture of Jesus alongside those of Krishna and Buddha in Hindu homes. One can see two approaches mixed up here. While some see Jesus as a divine manifestation, others see him as the perfect man. There is no basic contradiction between these two approaches, though the first is devotional-religious and the other is philosophical, since, according to Hindu anthropology/theology, every human is potentially divine and there is no radical differentiation between the divine and the human. Such a Hindu view of Jesus is not anti-Christian polemic, but the integration of Jesus and his significance in the pluralistic Hindu cultural and religious universe. One should not forget at the same time that, whatever be the orthodoxy of such views in Christian eyes, Jesus has had and still has a very positive impact in the lives of many Hindus.

The Cosmic Christ

The Indian Christian understanding of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the context of religious pluralism tends to be of two kinds. Many will acknowledge today what is positive in Indian religious traditions. Some tend to adopt a comparative and evolutionary perspective and see Christ as the fulfilment of other religions. The basic paradigm is the biblical one of preparation-fulfilment. Others suggest the image of the cosmic Christ. Already in the New Testament Paul and John move from the experience of Jesus, especially of the risen one, to the mystery of Christ. Paul sees him as "the first-born of all creation", in whom "were created all things" who "is before all things" and in whom "all things hold together" (Col 1:15-17). John sees him as the Word who was in the beginning, through whom all things came to be and who is the true light which enlightens everyone (cf. Jn 1:1-9).

Christ therefore is the cosmic mystery, the Word, whose salvific power reaches out to all human beings in ways unknown to us (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22). The Word becomes flesh and the paschal mystery of his death and Resurrection is the historical concretisation of God's saving action. This means that one can encounter Christ also outside the visible Christian community. One should be careful not to confuse the 'cosmic Christ' with the 'Christ of faith' who is distinguished from the 'Jesus of history' in certain traditions of biblical interpretation.

The Indian Artists: Hindu and Christian

The final group of Indians that I would like to evoke are the artists, both Hindu and Christian. More than 20 Hindu artists have painted pictures of Christ. Their preferred motif is the suffering Christ. The Hindu Gods do not suffer. It is the passion of Christ that attracts them and in it they see the passion of humanity. This is certainly a Christological statement. As one of them, Arup Das, who also claimed to have had a vision of Jesus, put it powerfully:

"These paintings of mine owe very much to the theme of Christ. I chose Christ, to Gandhi, quite unconsciously in the beginning and then I realised that nobody suffered as much as He in all history. His crucifixion was transcendental and His *agony* unparalleled. In fact agony is the theme of my paintings. Agony, not of Christ and Gandhi alone but of Man, miserable man".

The Christian artists have painted themes from the life of Christ in a context of *bhakti*. Christ has been painted with Indian features in Indian dress and in Indian natural surroundings. Some have also used symbolic Indian motifs and colour schemes. This seems to be an affirmation that Christ is as much Indian as he was Jewish: he is universal. At least in some cases there may be, besides, a reference to his cosmic dimension. One of the modern artists, Jyoti Sahi, has moved beyond such external Indianisation to see and paint Christ through Indian religious symbols. Thus we have the *Yogi* - Christ, *Nataraj* (the dancing God) - Christ, *Trimurti* (the Indian Trinity) - Christ, Baby *Krishna* - Buddha-Christ, *Ardhanariswara* (half man - half women) Christ, etc. More recently he is discovering the prophetic vocation of the Christian artist and his representations of Christ relate to the oppressed tribals and untouchables. This is a strong affirmation of the mystery of the incarnation.

The Apophatic Christ

The last person I wish to refer to is *Swami Abishiktananda*. Though he was French by birth, he had become thoroughly Indian by his experience. He tried to have an authentic Indian experience of God and all through his life he tried to integrate his Indian and his Christian spiritual experiences. He saw Jesus as the perfect *advaitin*, united with the Father in perfect non-duality. He felt that every Christian was called to share, in and through Christ, in this experience of non-dual unity. He constantly struggled with Indian and European thought patterns to express his experience. But towards the end of his life he had concluded that his experience is really beyond expression and became apophatic, though the experience itself had transformed him. His experience was at a mystical level, not accessible to the normal Christian. But he is a contemporary Indian Christian witness to the apophatic dimension of God-experience, which we should keep in mind even as we explore the images of Jesus in India.

Towards a New Methodology

After this brief historical and rather typological survey, I would like to return to the task of Christological reflection in India today. It is a fact that many of the people whom we have been talking about, were or are in the periphery of the Church. Our theological language is still largely Western. Our reflection still moves at the level of translation and comparison. Christological reflection itself seems caught up with the questions of the uniqueness and universality of Christ. So in a second part I would like to explore future, more creative, avenues of Christological reflection in deep continuity with the past that I have recounted.

I think that to start with we need a new methodology. I shall outline this briefly. The starting point is faith-experience. In our case, it is the experience of Jesus. This Jesus is not found in the pages of the Gospels nor in the creedal formulae of the Church. He is experienced in the life of the community of faith, in the dialectical interaction between the Jesus of tradition and the reality of the others in the world. The others, especially the poor, are the mediation of Jesus in our lives today (Mt 25:31-46) and the story of Jesus in the tradition of the community helps us to discern the presence of that same Jesus in the reality of the present moment. This is how Jesus becomes significant and meaningful to us here and now.

Our experience finds expression in image, symbol and story - just as the Gospels are made up of the stories told by the Disciples who first encountered him. Images and symbols come from the natural, human and historical experience of the community. Thus Jesus is experienced as light, living water, Good Shepherd, prophet, messiah. All these become names for Jesus. They are not just labels but mediations of lived experience. In the Indian context our particular religious and cultural traditions would be - or should preferentially be - the source of images, names and symbols. Such symbols can highlight newer aspects of the mystery of Christ. Symbols do not have a fixed meaning even within a tradition. They are certainly open to reinterpretation across traditions.

Symbols give rise to reflection. But the reflection is hermeneutical, interpretative, not systematic. While systematic thought starts from first principles and proceeds according to a rigorous logical method, hermeneutical thought depends on the experiential context - both person/community and the life-reality - of the interpreter(s). Its claim is not to abstract universality and objectivity, but to relevance. There is also room for pluralism, not only because interpreters and their contexts can differ, but also because symbols themselves tend to be polyvalent. The multiple references and allusions of a symbol can be sources of enrichment. Starting from one's experience one is also freed from the burden of questions and answers that may have arisen in a different cultural and experiential context.

The normative point of unity is of course the primordial experience as lived in the faith of the community. But this unity is a dynamic one, experienced in the dialogical interplay of a variety of experiences, symbols and interpretations. Reflection based on experience and symbol can also integrate the popular and *élite* components in a given community's faith experience. One needs to contemplate a symbol before reflecting over it.

It is against the background of this methodology that I would like to evoke some images and symbols for Christ in contemporary Indian experience. My evocation is in the context of the Christian community in India. But I am prescinding from a comparative, even a dialogical perspective - unless one can talk of an interior dialogue between two or more traditions that have been inherited by the

community. My intention is not to be exhaustive, but indicative. I propose today for our contemplation and reflection four symbols: the Guru, the Mother, the Dancer and the *Avatara*...

Jesus, The *Guru*

The *Guru* in Indian tradition is the master, the guide, the teacher, the initiator. He can speak about God because he has himself experienced him. He can show the way to God-realisation because he has walked along that way and has arrived. He teaches not so much in a multiplicity of words, but more often through example. Silence can be a powerful way of communication too. He does not communicate mere knowledge, but facilitates an experience. His guidance is adapted to the needs and capacities of the disciple.

In Indian tradition, since every human person is potentially divine or is capable of union with the divine, the *Guru* is some one who has realised such unity with the divine. That is why gurus, even while alive and when they are dead, become objects of worship. In the tradition of the worshipers of Shiva (*Saiva Siddhanta*) God himself comes in the form of the *Guru* when the disciple is ready, after a period of ascetical preparation, for guidance and initiation to the path of ultimate realisation and union. Relationship to a *Guru* is a very personal one, that transcends structures of any kind.

Not only Hindus, but many Christians have seen Jesus as their *Guru*. To indicate his uniqueness as the way to God they call Him the *Sadguru - the True Guru*. One could say that he alone has all the qualities that are characteristic of a *Guru*.

In the Gospels Jesus calls himself the Way (cf. Jn 14:6). He speaks of God from his personal experience of oneness with God (cf. Jn 3:31-32). He alone has seen the Father. He invites the Disciples to share the unity of life that he has with the Father (cf. Jn 6:57; 17:21). But they have to follow the way of the Cross that he himself has trod, (cf. Mk 8:34-35) dying and rising with him (Rom 6:4). He is more than a teacher or master or prophet in the tradition of Israel

To see Jesus as the *Guru* is to think of Christian life as a discipleship, that focuses not merely on knowledge, but on life and experience. Union with God is mediated through a deep personal relationship with Jesus. The experience of Jesus as the *Sadguru* does not necessarily do away with the need of usefulness of other human *gurus*, but radically relativises their role.

Jesus, The Dancer

One of the best known symbols of God in Indian religious tradition is that of *Nataraja*, the King of the dancers. The dance is symbolic of the divine activity of creation, destruction and recreation in the cosmos. Dance is the symbol of dynamism, of joy, of creativity, of fulfilment. The cosmic dance is seen also as a victory over the principle of evil and over the inertia of matter. Indian tradition underlines the gratuity of God's creative action by seeing it as *lila* - play. It evokes imagination, inventiveness, spontaneity, and constant newness.

A contemporary Christian artist, Jyoti Sahi, has often portrayed the risen Christ a dancing Christ. I think that there is a profound intuition and intention here. A certain tradition in Christianity tends to focus on sin and suffering and on the image of the suffering Christ. Our experience of suffering and need for forgiveness is real. But the real message of Jesus is the joy and hope of the irruption of the Reign of God in his own person, especially symbolised by his Resurrection.

The dancing Christ is therefore a symbol of hope that challenges us to creative newness to collaborate with God who is making all things new (Rv 21:5). It is an invitation to participate in the creativity of the Spirit, (Rom 8:9-11). Christ is indeed at the head of a cosmic movement that leads to a recreation of all things, in the heart of God's own being and life (cf. 1 Cor 15:28). The goal of life is this communion of all in God which is the source of unbounded joy - *ananda*. Dance is the symbol and expression of this joy.

Dance is also the symbol of integration. Sacred dance is the primordial liturgical activity of tribal groups. It not only unites a community of people in the dynamism of rhythm and movement. It is also a unity of melody, rhythm and meaning, thus mediating and realising the integration of the body, the mind and the emotions. The dancing Christ is therefore the symbol of wholeness, of hope, of joy, of the fullness of life.

Jesus, The Mother

I have referred above to two Indian Christian poets who have experienced Jesus as mother. This is not a common symbol for Jesus, though even in European tradition Juliana of Norwich has called Jesus 'mother'.

Contemporary feminist movements tend to speak of the femininity in God, who is Father and Mother. Sometimes one also speaks of the Spirit in the Trinity as the feminine principle. To speak of Jesus as mother may be unhistorical. But symbols transcend history. Motherhood seems the best symbol to point to Jesus as the compassionate one.

Jesus is God with us - *Emmanuel*. He is the human face of God, but of a humanity that is poor, suffering and oppressed. But God becomes human in Jesus, not simply to identify himself with our suffering, but to bring about a transformation. But death precedes the Resurrection and Jesus dies with us. This is really the measure of his compassion, which literally means suffering with. There is no other adequate human symbol for this except the Mother with her suffering child.

In Indian tradition the Mother Goddess is a complex symbol: of origins and roots, of wisdom and wealth, of power and dynamism, of victory over evil, of grace and tenderness, of healing. Even in Buddhism, by the side of the image of the Buddha in interiorising contemplation, his compassion is symbolised by the Goddess of Mercy. The 'mother' symbol is not a sexual one, but highlights certain aspects of the mystery of God in relation to us.

In Christian tradition, Mary, the mother of Jesus, has become the symbol of God's compassion, especially in popular piety. However, the compassion of Jesus comes alive in two other symbolic mediations. One is the symbol of the Heart of Jesus, a symbol of suffering love and compassion. It may be significant that the Sacred Heart is probably the most popular image of Jesus in India, even among the Hindus. The other symbol of the life-giving compassion of Jesus is the Eucharist: the symbol of love and self-gift, of sacrifice and sharing, of life and communion in body and blood.

Jesus, The *Avatara*

The final image of Jesus that I wish to evoke today is that of Jesus as the *avatara*. *Avatara* literally means 'descent', but is popularly used to refer to the manifestation of God in human form. Technically it does not have the same meaning as the incarnation, which means becoming human and not merely taking on a human form.

But such differences of meaning are not adverted to in popular devotion and the term *avatara* is used to mean incarnation in some of the Indian languages - in Tamil, for example. However, I am not using the term *avatara* in its technical sense, but as a symbol, as it is often lived at a popular level, whether Hindu or Christian.

God becomes an *avatara*, not only to be near us and to share our human condition with its suffering, but rather to liberate us. As we have seen in the text from the *Bhagavad Gita* that I have cited about, the historical context of the *avatara* is a world where there is an ongoing conflict between Good and Evil, in which Evil seems to be dominant. God then intervenes as the Saviour, to liberate the world from Evil and to re-establish *dharma* or right order. Thus liberation is not an alienation so that one is rescued from an evil world, but a rectification in which the moral order is restored. God appears as the guarantor of the moral order.

The image of the *avatara* also recognises the reality of conflict and the need to struggle. *Dharma* is not something given. One has to fight for it. But the image of Jesus as *avatara* highlights the need for this conflict to be non-violent. Englobing love, for God and the others and for right order (righteousness of justice in biblical terminology) is the context of the inevitable struggle and opts for creative, not passive, non-violence. The means are not justified by the end, but must be in consonance with it. Perhaps the person who understood this Christian perspective best and practised it was Mahatma Gandhi. His roots in Indian tradition certainly helped him to understand more deeply and follow Jesus, the supreme *satyagrahi*.

Conclusion

One could further multiply symbols. One could speak of Jesus, the perfect *Yogi*, for instance. But that is not necessary for my purpose here. I hope to have shown that symbols rise out of faith experience in the context of life-situations in a particular culture and tradition. These symbols lead to reflection. More even than that, they motivate and inspire us to action. Thus symbols not only give us an insight into the mystery of God, the humans and the world, but mediate the integration of history into the mystery that God has revealed to us in Jesus Christ (Eph 1:3-14).

Ref: *East Asian Pastoral Review*, Volume 31 (1994), n. 1/2.

UNE THEOLOGIE A PARTIR DU SUD

Victor Codina

La théologie de la libération a été l'objet de conflits d'origines diverses, tant politiques que théologiques, les deux ne pouvant être "abstraitement" séparés l'un de l'autre. Dial s'est fait régulièrement l'écho de cette situation depuis une vingtaine d'année. Aujourd'hui, après l'effondrement tant des dictatures latino-américaines que des régimes communistes, la théologie de la libération, contrairement à ce que l'on peut lire parfois en Occident, reste bel et bien vivante. Mais la réalité latino-américaine ayant changé depuis la naissance de cette théologie il y a vingt-cinq ans, celle-ci est donc appelée à opérer certains changements pour répondre à la situation historique nouvelle. C'est ce que tente d'expliciter le théologien Victor Codina, demeurant en Bolivie depuis 1982.

Durant ces dernières années, à la catégorie socio-économique de "pauvre", qui sans doute possédait des connotations de classe, s'est ajoutée la réalité d'autres formes d'oppression, comme la race, la culture et le sexe. Le concept de pauvre doit inclure le Noir, l'indigène, la femme, qui souffrent d'oppressions qui ne sont pas seulement socio-économiques.

La rupture Nord-Sud

S'il y a 20 ans une réflexion qui partait du Sud et des pauvres d'Amérique Latine était justifiée, elle l'est encore plus aujourd'hui. La paupérisation du Sud a augmenté et le fossé entre un Nord riche et un Sud pauvre s'est encore creusé. Les évêques latino-américains, réunis à Saint-Domingue en octobre 1992, l'ont confirmé devant toute l'Amérique Latine: l'appauvrissement de la majorité du peuple s'est accru et il faut réaffirmer l'option évangélique pour les pauvres. D'autre part, bien que la théologie de la libération ait analysé la réalité de la pauvreté en utilisant les éléments de la sociologie moderne, elle n'a jamais fondé sa réflexion sur la sociologie mais sur la foi et la Parole de Dieu. Toute théologie est réflexion croyante à partir de la foi, dans l'Église et la fidélité à la tradition authentique. Ainsi en est-il de la théologie de la libération.

La nouveauté de la théologie de la libération ne réside pas dans sa doctrine, mais dans son approche méthodologique et s'inscrit ainsi dans le courant prophétique qui n'a jamais fait défaut dans toute l'histoire de l'Église: d'Isaïe à Jésus de Nazareth, de Jean Chrysostome à Bernard, de François d'Assise à Antonio de Montésinos, de Bartholomé de Las Casas à Jean XXIII, de Helder Camara à Monseigneur Romero, de Pedro Casaldaliga à Ignacio Ellacuría...

S'il est vrai que le modèle socialiste a pu en attirer quelques-uns, car il possédait une utopie sociale plus proche des valeurs de l'Évangile que le modèle capitaliste (qui n'a même pas d'utopie...), jamais la théologie de la libération ne s'est liée à une praxis partisane déterminée.

Aujourd'hui, alors que le mur de Berlin est tombé, cette théologie, qui pour beaucoup n'est plus de mode, ne perd pas sa mission ni son inspiration évangélique profonde: jamais n'a été plus grande la distance entre le Nord et le Sud. Par cela même devient plus grande l'urgence d'une dénonciation et d'une réflexion prophétique et libératrice.

quelque chose doit changer

Cependant nous serions naïfs si nous nous obstinions à affirmer que rien n'a changé. Si l'une des qualités de la théologie de la libération est d'être une réflexion qui part de la réalité, la théologie doit changer en partie dans sa propre réflexion dès lors que la réalité a changé.

Approfondir l'analyse sociale

Il est nécessaire d'approfondir l'analyse sociale, peut-être en complétant la théorie de la dépendance avec celle de la marginalisation. Il faut reconnaître les échecs de ce que l'on appelle le socialisme réel, sans que pour cela disparaissent les qualités de son utopie, le désir d'une société plus égale, où il n'y ait plus ni situations de mort ou de misère, ni même de simple survie humaine.

Plus de modestie

De plus l'analyse de la réalité oblige à plus de modestie dans les prétentions. On ne peut plus parler aussi allègrement que dans les années '60 de changements rapides de structures, ni de l'accès des pauvres au pouvoir, ni du triomphe des gauches à court terme. Il faut éviter tout soupçon d'illusion millénariste. Nous sommes dans une période de fort conservatisme et de réaffirmation du modèle néolibéral.

Des grands discours aux petites actions

La force historique des pauvres ne consiste pas dans la prise de pouvoir politique, mais dans quelque chose de plus profond et lent, lié aux dimensions quotidiennes de la vie sociale, familiale et ecclésiale. Il semble que nous sommes en train de passer du "macro" au "micro", des grands discours idéologiques aux petites actions concrètes, du parfaitement défini et organisé à la recherche d'espaces nouveaux et simples, qui pénètrent peu à peu tous les comportements sociaux: groupes de femmes, de jeunes, de communautés de quartiers, de communautés de base. Nous assistons à une nouvelle émergence de la société civile et de la base.

Le concept de pauvre

Durant ces dernières années, à la catégorie socio-économique de "pauvre", qui sans doute possédait des connotations de classe, s'est ajoutée la réalité d'autres formes d'oppression, comme la race, la culture et le sexe. Le concept de pauvre doit inclure le Noir, l'indigène, la femme, qui souffrent d'oppressions qui ne sont pas seulement socio-économiques.

Mais d'autre part l'indigène, le Noir ou la femme ne sont pas que des sous-classes du prolétariat, ils ont une identité culturelle et humaine que l'on ne peut pas analyser uniquement à partir de catégories socio-économiques ou socio-analytiques. Ce sont des sujets d'une grande richesse humaine, culturelle, religieuse, qui enrichissent la vision de l'histoire à partir d'autres perspectives.

La dimension culturelle

Tout ce qui arrive dans les anciens pays communistes démontre que si on ignore la dimension culturelle des peuples, elles finissent par s'exprimer violemment sous formes de nationalismes sauvages. Dans l'Église, le récent document de la IVème Conférence de l'Episcopat Latino-américain de Saint-Domingue a réaffirmé l'importance du thème des cultures et de l'inculturation de l'Évangile.

A côté des médiations socio-économiques, la théologie de la libération commence à sentir la nécessité d'en utiliser d'autres, comme celle de l'anthropologie, des cultures et des religions.

Nous nous trouvons alors à un moment crucial qui déconcerte peut-être ceux de "l'ancien premier monde", par sa logique rationnelle et sécularisée, et les héritiers de "l'ancien second monde", peu sensibles à tout ce qui n'est pas analyse économique.

Faire de la théologie à partir du Sud

Le théologie de la libération, ses théologiens les plus représentatifs et orthodoxes, ont réfléchi à la pauvreté du Sud, mais avec des instruments du Nord, que ce soit à partir de la modernité occidentale ou à partir de la modernité socialiste. Et

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sûrement devaient-ils faire ainsi, pour que leur langage fût compris et estimé par les théologiens modernes. Mais c'est un fait, la théologie de la libération, qui a surgi du Sud, a utilisé jusqu'à présent presque uniquement des instruments du Nord.

Aussi bien la pensée moderne occidentale que la pensée socialiste appartiennent à la rationalité critique du Nord, à sa raison instrumentale et à l'esprit du Siècle des lumières. Smith, Keynes et Friedman sont autant les fils du monde moderne que Marx et Engels. Les deux systèmes sont parvenus à des résultats semblables sur beaucoup de points: matérialisme (théorique ou pratique), individualisme (de famille ou de parti), violence (structurelle ou terroriste), impérialisme face au tiers-monde (qu'il soit de droite ou de gauche), rationalisme (technique ou révolutionnaire), etc.

Autrement dit, la théologie de la libération a toujours été élaborée par des personnes et des méthodes imprégnées du système de pensée du Nord. Ce n'est pas qu'il soit erroné ou caduc, mais il est certainement insuffisant. Aujourd'hui le Sud veut revendiquer son autonomie humaine, politique, culturelle et religieuse, différente de celle du Nord. Et la théologie de la libération ne peut rester étrangère à cette exigence légitime. Le Sud a le droit de penser à partir de ses propres catégories, sans être un appendice du Nord, ni en politique, ni en économie, ni en théologie.

De la raison instrumentale a la raison symbolique

Autant en Occident qu'à l'Est s'est développée la modernité de la raison instrumentale, que ce soit dans le domaine technique ou sociologique. Le Sud vit dans d'autres catégories comme par exemple la raison symbolique. En quoi consiste-t-elle? Elle est difficile à définir par sa nature même qui est supra-rationnelle. Mais elle comporte une sensibilité différente au réel, une syntonie cosmique avec la nature, une expérience vécue intense de la solidarité

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humaine et communautaire, une grande sensibilité religieuse qui s'exprime en rites, mythes et fêtes, un réalisme magique, un grand sens de la vie prise dans son intégralité c'est-à-dire en incluant le corps, l'esprit, la création, l'histoire du présent et du passé, une forte tension vers de définitif, une attitude contemplative devant la vie, une valorisation de la culture locale et de son identité nationale, une honnêteté éthique avec le réel. Il suffit de lire quelques oeuvres de la littérature latino-américaine pour se persuader de cela. Il arrive des choses insolites aux protagonistes latino-américains qui voyagent en Europe dans *Doce cuentos peregrinos* de Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

On ne doit pas tomber dans un manichéisme facile (tout ce qui vient du Nord est mauvais, tout ce qui vient du Sud est bon), ni dans un romantisme d'anthropologues à la recherche de "réserves d'Indiens", on ne peut pas non plus oublier les processus croissants de modernisation et d'urbanisation du Sud, ni ceux, compliqués, du métissage antique ou moderne. Il s'agit davantage de revenir au Sud sans mépriser les éléments positifs du Nord et auxquels on ne peut renoncer, mais en tout cas en les assumant et en les discernant à partir de ses propres racines historiques et culturelles.

La théologie de la libération n'a pas encore développé toutes ses possibilités; elle doit s'enraciner davantage dans les chemins poudreux du Sud, où les étoiles brillent et où le ciel est d'un bleu intense, où la nature est encore exubérante et verte, sans la pollution ni les brouillards du Nord. Concrètement on devrait dialoguer non seulement avec les vieilles cultures andines (quechua, aymara...), mais aussi avec celles des montagnes (guarani et axeguayaki) et celles du Chaco (nivacle, toba, ayoreo...).

Au niveau théologique cela suppose, entre autres choses, une plus grande sensibilité à la présence de l'Esprit dans le peuple, dans ses cris et son espérance, dans ses cultures et ses utopies. Cet

Esprit, qui bat des ailes aujourd'hui chez les nouveaux "barbares" du Sud, est encore une source d'espérance, en ces temps d'incertitude. Alors que tous les empires humains tombent, l'Esprit du Seigneur, lui, demeure.

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THE COST OF RECONCILIATION

Bishop Federico E. Pagura

Earlier this year the "confessions" of General Martin Balza and a number of military chiefs shocked the Argentine people and a great part of Latin America. They confessed to their participation in the death squads during the military dictatorship in Argentina and publicly asked for pardon. Bishop Federico E. Pagura of the Methodist Church of Argentina shares his reflections on these revelations.

We must thank Rolón, Pernía, Scilingo and the journalists who broadcast their confessions, for reopening (even though it is still far from a deep repentance, much less a true conversion in the biblical sense) the theme which, neither justifications of obedience to authority, nor a *punto final* amnesty law, even less a presidential pardon, had managed to close in the consciences of Argentines. This is the theme of subversive violence and State terrorism, of truth and justice, and of reconciliation.

While I think that a theme of such seriousness and depth as this one poses to Argentines - but not just Argentines, because other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean went through similar situations, and beyond our America, in Ireland, the Philippines, the Middle East and other countries of Asia and Africa, as well - deserves a book, or at least a long essay, I will attempt to outline some elements that could shed some light on the difficult road on which we have just started.

1. We must agree that what has happened to us Argentines during these decades of terror and death is a true tragedy that has affected us so deeply that we must exclaim as Saint Paul did in his famous letter to the Romans: "What a wretched man I am! Who will deliver me from this body doomed to death?" (Rom 7:24) Maybe here, in the cry of the protagonist of the book the "Prince of Tides" that Dr Grondona showed in his programme *Hora Clave* ("Key Hour"), could lie the start of the painful road to freedom and reconciliation.

2. We must agree that all over simplification or all Manichean attitudes to this problem and tragedy that involves all of our generation, blocks the path to a genuine solution to the problem that keeps dividing and defying us Argentines. Not all the protagonists of this fratricidal struggle were angels, nor were all demons. Perhaps in all of us beats - according to the most profound psychological interpretations and most honest theological visions - an angel and a demon that debate in an agonised struggle between love and hate, the deepest pain and the most demented pride, the moments of human lucidity and the moments of aberrant cruelty. Only those who have lived it, with or without a uniform, can know what it is like, what depths of agony and terror must be faced in the debate of whether to kill or to die, whether to annihilate a human being or realise that the phrase "Thou shalt not kill" remains valid, even though the human race has invented an arsenal of instruments of death, from the electric chair to the atom bomb, to destroy our counterparts. In spite of it all, with them we destroy our consciences, our life itself.

3. We must accept as well that the violence that we have lived through, and that still lies in the bottom of our hearts, revealing itself every time we stir up our emotions or question the things that we most deeply believe in, was not born by spontaneous generation or by magic. Perhaps one of the most lucid actors (as an exponent of active non-violence) in those times of hate of death, Helder Cámara, then Bishop of Olinda and Recife, was the person who, in a little book titled "The Spiral of Violence," described its genesis and development with great courage, clarity and depth. In its first chapter, called "Humanity Threatened", he formulated his thesis on violence in these terms. "We see everywhere that injustice is violence. And it can be said - should be said - that injustice is the first of all acts of violence, the number one violence.... This institutionalised, installed violence attracts the second form of violence: the revolution by the oppressed, by youth committed to fighting for a more just, humane world.... And when this "response" to this injustice reaches the streets, when the second violence confronts the first violence, the authorities feel they have the obligation to save the public order, or to restore it.... In this way the third form of violence enters. The logic of violence leads to the moral and physical use of torture, as if the confessions extracted by torture could be trusted as the certain truth.... It is the era of the Inquisition with the technology of the era of nuclear bombs and space travel at its service....". I believe that the writings of Helder Cámara provides us with the key to understanding and interpreting the origin of this phenomenon of violence and crime that has darkened not only our country, but all the humanity of our generation and of previous generations. In this way it also shows us the only way that we can prevent, stop, or at least reduce, this spiral of violence that leads us relentlessly to catastrophe and death.

4. This moment in history provides us with a space for self-examination, for self-criticism with respect to our actions during those dismal and atrocious times which we lived through. Without this action and this gesture of honesty there is no exit from the spiral of violence in which we are trapped. Here, historians, theologians, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers, writers, journalists, honest politicians, and the main protagonists of the sad episodes that we have lived through, have a profound role to play. They must overcome all the electoral calculations of the moment, all the threats

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and fear, all the double-talk, hypocrisy and arrogance that we have been dragging along with us for so long, and state that we are debtors to truth and justice, and to the love of God (for those of us who are believers), to the love of a people that desperately need to find the road to a true reconciliation. To illustrate this point, beginning with the world I know best, the Roman Catholic Church and the other Christian Churches, will be immobilised, paralysed, if they do not expound in deeds and thoughts, without cowardice or reservations, the spirit of God, which is basically the spirit of truth, justice and love. In this sense, the lucidity of journalist Horacio Verbitsky could help us greatly. In one of his most recent articles he said what he qualified as "the basic ambiguity of the Church during the dirty war, when it helped some of the persecuted and comforted the families, but at the price of strangling its own voice, which was only heard in the privacy of official circles, secret documents or in elliptical references within public documents related to other questions".

Expanding on this thought, in my humble understanding, the spiral in which the Church is trapped consists in the fact that many of the promoters and defenders of this structural violence in which we are caught fervently profess to belong to the Catholic faith or have been educated in its institutions. Many of the Montenero guerrillas (as the recent document by five Catholic Bishops attests) who have killed and been killed in this cruel struggle studied and grew up in Catholic institutions with teachers of the same faith. And, to close the circle, the armed forces Vicariate, and a good part of the chaplain corps, who theologially justified the repression and eased the consciences of the kidnappers and torturers, were definitely accepted as an indisputable part of the ecclesiastic institution. In that sad time, only a limited and courageous number of Bishops, priests, religious and lay workers questioned, starting from the Gospel, this "basic ambiguity" to which the journalist referred. They questioned it, often at the cost of their lives, health and personal safety. But neither are the other Christian Churches (Orthodox or Evangelical) exempt from such self-examination, be it for cowardice, silence or complicity. I remember ministers who, at the start of the struggle, prominently displayed the image of General Perón, whose instructional cassettes for fighting subversion were circulating clandestinely. There were ministers who condemned Christian leaders who participated in human rights groups, accusing them of ideological deviation and subversion. I remember ministers who defended the actions of the armed forces as if they were "the last moral bastion left to the nation".

But the hour for truth has arrived for all members of a psychologically and morally sick nation. And the armed forces, who not only betrayed their best tradition of San Martín for generations - which was invariably proclaimed for every patriotic and public holiday - but also became the main instrument for the "state terrorism" that shook our countries, writing the most indignant and aberrant chapters in our history, are obliged as institutions to recognise and confess to their now undeniable crimes. Or, on the contrary, trapped in a pact of blood and silence, or in the very sad condition of "manada" - or belonging to the herd, as Argentine psychologists refer to it - they will be condemned to go down in history, and in the judgment of God and the coming generations, as one of the most perverse and cowardly groups of human beings that the country has ever had to endure.

5. And this pool of shame was made worse by the frustrated adventure in the Malvinas, by the crimes that came from the "unemployed workers" of the dirty war and the criminal organisations of this time that still appear in our society, by the "military advisory missions" that are clandestinely exported to other parts of Latin America, and by the mistreatment and death of army conscripts whose deaths appear in the police pages of our daily newspapers. We cannot cover this up or avoid responsibility for it under timid or clumsy explanations put forth by the Ministry of Defence or the Executive. Less still by pious acts, such as the sacramental communion or the mystic evasion performed by people such as General Videla who

concentrated on the meditation on the "Seven words of Jesus from the Cross", at the same time as the national tribunal was announcing the verdict of guilty for his multiple crimes.

6. Maybe talks with the human rights organisations or with the parents of the victims of the arbitrariness of the military institutions, proved by General Balza, can offer us a methodology which can provide a way out of the dead-end in which we Argentines are trapped. Maybe some guerrillas who have the courage to recognise their errors and betrayal of some basic human values that they once embraced and promised to defend can come forward and confess. Or a recognition of what the many Rolónes, Pernías, Scilingos and Vergéz are doing to deal with the atrocities that they voluntarily, or for the poor excuse of "following orders", committed, and are now taking painful, difficult steps to address. They have helped us discover this truth which was a whispered secret but which has no curative or liberating effects. It must advance until it is not only admitted by protagonists and witnesses, but is accompanied by repentance, confession and the explicit commitment to a "Never Again" which, from the cold pages of a book, should be turned into a firm and vigorous vote on our lips and in our hearts. The autobiographical testimony of one of the writers of the biblical psalms illustrates this: *"As long as I would not speak, my bones wasted away with my groaning all the day, for day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you, my guilt I covered not. I said, 'I confess my faults to the Lord', and you took away the guilt of my sin"* (Ps 32:3-5).

7. The pages of the Gospels also say this to illuminate our road in these times so favourable to introspection, deep reflection, authentic conversion and complete liberation, which the Easter announcement wants to produce in our lives and our society.

I close these reflections with a thought and episode that deeply marked my spirit in these long years in service of the Gospel and Life. Many years ago when I was a seminarian I shared a week of pastoral work with Earl Smith, an active apostle of non-violence, who started among us the Brotherhood of Reconciliation and Peace - today known as the Peace and Justice Service (SERPAJ) - which is headed on our continent by Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. There, in his pastoral study, in a very visible location, he had a small blackboard on which every week he wrote a thought on which he focused his attention and inspiration each day.

In the week of my visit, the thought chosen was the following: "It is not the bad that they do to me, but what I myself do that can cause me harm". Since then, this thought has accompanied me each day and has helped me open roads to pardon and reconciliation which seemed completely closed.

More recently, in the job assigned to me of presiding over three successive advisory committees in search of peace and justice and a solution to the serious conflict that has divided the Guatemalan people for so long, we met for more than a week in Guatemala City with representatives of the civil sector (workers, businesses, universities, journalists, politicians, etc.), religious sector (Bishops, ministers, religious, both Catholic and Protestant), the

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Government, the Armed Forces and the URNG, as well as important representatives of the Mayan People. At the head of the table was Rigoberta Menchú (Nobel Prize winner), the Rev. Quezada Toruño, former mediator and current President of the Civilian Assembly, and Jean Arnault, the mediator appointed by the United Nations. After informing, commenting and freely and broadly discussing the current situation in Guatemala and the state of the peace talks, one night we met in the Metropolitan Cathedral to hold an ecumenical service of reflection and prayer for our beloved sister nation. When we approached the moment of the kiss of peace, we saw one of the most vigorous fighters in defence of human rights, a victim herself whose husband was "disappeared" - and still has not been returned - by the armed forces, shake hands with a retired navy officer who also participated in the liturgy.

The following day, in an evaluative session, many participants in the ecumenical event frankly and emotionally expressed what the meeting in the cathedral had meant to them. A union leader who had participated in the "unexpected" kiss of peace, staring at the military representatives, said more or less the following: "I never would have agreed to shake hands with you, Gentlemen, because you took something very precious from me, my partner, and ruined a large part of my life and my home. But something

happened last night in the celebration. Something very intimate and very profound. I felt that I had to overcome my hate and my pride and I offered my hand to my uniformed neighbour so that some channel of peace may be opened for the future of our country". I understand that, at the end of the session, in the presence of Church witnesses, something similar was said by the marine representative to the defender of human rights. In the consultation, a breath of fresh air entered. Not that it could have solved the problems, nor that the discussion could reduce its severity and force. Many problems remain to be solved and breakthroughs to be made. To reach the reconciliation and peace we are looking for, neither truth nor justice nor love can be bought or sold at any price. But as one person reasonably told the UN representative that afternoon: "In these few days and hours, we have made advances that we had not been able to achieve

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in months and years. We still have a long way to go, but we are marching forward".

Hopefully this new and refreshing breath of air that came on the Easter of Resurrection puts us alongside the Argentines on the road to reconciliation and peace, but always in the light of the Truth, "which is the only thing that can set us free", of justice, "which should run free like a stream" and of Love, "in which, and for which, we will be examined in the twilight of life" (St John of the Cross), and without its presence in our lives and in the life of our nation, we are nothing and have nothing to hope for.

Easter 1995

Note: These reflections do not attempt to be anything more than a humble contribution to the greater debate that is taking place across broad sectors of our society. It is taking place in spite of the intense efforts to silence it by people whose personal interests, and whose model of blood and fire which was imposed on us by the dictatorship, are being threatened by truth and justice.

The fact that we are doing this during Holy Week and the time of Easter, obliges us as Christians to start first with ourselves, as does the fact that the armed forces, in all its open and clandestine activity, has acted in the name of "Western Christian civilisation". This does not diminish in any way the need to unmask the responsibility that the political class and the economic forces have in this cruel chapter of our history. They must also examine their role in the defence and implementation of a socio-political and economic model that, in spite of the amazing technology and the materialist and consumerist zeal that it produces, is covering up one of the most refined and cruel idolatries and genocides in history.

The following biblical phrase applies to these sectors as well: "*For there is nothing hidden that will not be made manifest; nor is there anything concealed that will not come to the light*", (Mk 4:22) and "*Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For what a man sows, that he will also reap*" (Gal 6:7).

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