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EDITORIAL

By mailing you this first issue of our 1998 SEDOS Bulletin, our secretariat, serving the 96 member congregations, would like to take the opportunity to wish you a Very Happy and Blessed Year of 1998.

The Dominican theologian VINCENT COSMAO, takes the thirtieth anniversary of the Encyclical "*Populorum progressio*" in order to highlight this document's great actuality for the social questions of today. His reflections turn around four basic points: globalisation, growth, planification and justice in commercial relations.

The Missiologist AYLWARD SHORTER, MAfr., teaching theology in Kenya, studies in his article the phenomena of *secularism* in modern Africa. He passes from some popular assumptions concerning Secularism, to secularism as unbelief and consumer materialism. —

In the second part of our issue we are presenting three interesting reflections from Asia for the coming Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops. Fr. MICHAEL AMALADOSS, SJ, has done research on the concept of *Integral Evangelization*, as one of the important topics for the Synod in preparation. — In our second contribution to the Asian Synod, we present parts of the official response of the CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF JAPAN, where they insist that the coming Synod should be guided by the Asian context. — The third contribution to the Synod in preparation comes from Pakistan. Fr. CHRYS McVEY, OP, expresses the 'hopes and fears' as they are cherished by the small Missionary Church in Pakistan. —

We conclude our January edition with a biblical reflection on mission. Fr. MICHEL DUJARIER meditates on the itinerary of the Evangelist Mark, as an example for any young missionary.

Amaladoss Michael,
A la rencontre des cultures
Ed. Atelier, 1997

Louvel, R.
L'Afrique noire et la différence culturelle
Paris, Harmattan, 1997

Borrmans Maurice
Jésus et les musulmans d'aujourd'hui
Paris, Desclée, 1996

Müller K. / Ustorf W.
*Einleitung in die Missionsgeschichte:
Tradition, Situation und Dynamik des
Christentums*
Kohlhammer, 1995

Schreiter Robert
*The New Catholicity:
Theology between the Global and the Local*
Orbis Books, 1997

Blank Rodolfo
Teología y misión en América Latina
Recursos Etnicos, St. Louis, 1996

Saayman W. / Kritzinger K.
*Mission in Bold Humility:
David Bosch's Work Considered*
Orbis Books, 1996

Dyress William A.
*The Earth is God's
A theology of American Culture*
Orbis Books, 1997

Carrier Hervé, SJ
Evangelizing the Cultures of Modernity,
Orbis Books

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BOOKS

Populorum Progressio, 30 ans après

Vincent Cosmao, O.P.

Membre de l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs et lecteur en théologie, Vincent Cosmao a été aumônier d'Université à Lyon (1950-1955) et à Dakar (1955-1965). Appelé par le P. Lebreton à l'IRFED en 1965, il fonde en 1972 le Centre Lebreton Foi et Développement qu'il dirige jusqu'en 1983, puis préside pendant deux ans. Depuis 1988, il est Prieur du Couvent Saint Jacques à Paris.

Entamant sa cinquième lecture de *Populorum Progressio*, Vincent Cosmao en montre l'actualité pour éclairer la question sociale de notre temps. Il organise sa réflexion autour de quatre points fondamentaux: la mondialisation, la croissance, la planification et l'équité des relations commerciales.

Cet article est repris d'un texte publié dans le bulletin du Centre Lebreton (43ter, rue de la Glacière, 75013 Paris): «Foi et Développement» n° 250/251, février/mars 1997. Il a été revu et approuvé par l'auteur.

L'élaboration de *Populorum Progressio* a été mise en route au moment de la première Conférence des Nations Unies sur le Commerce et le Développement (CNUCED, Genève 1964) où Lebreton, porte parole de la délégation du Saint Siège lançait l'idée de l'instauration d'un Nouvel Ordre Économique International. C'est dans la foulée de sa participation intensive à la conférence de Genève où il fut, avec Che Guevara, l'intervenant le plus applaudi en séance plénière, que Lebreton se mit au travail pour écrire le projet que Paul VI lui avait demandé pour un document sur le développement des peuples.

Comme l'écrivait Éric Sottas, actuel président du Centre Lebreton, dans un article d'Économie et Humanisme en 1986: «Lebreton ne se définit pas comme un diplomate traditionnel mais davantage comme le porte parole de groupes défavorisés dont les besoins et les aspirations impliquent une réforme tant conceptuelle que pratique du système international et de l'Église catholique. Si ces discours ont eu un tel écho, c'est précisément parce que Lebreton avait su percevoir l'importance des enjeux et dégager des perspectives de réforme et de transformation de la société» (Il Le Père Lebreton et la CNUCED, Éric Sottas, Économie et Humanisme, n° spécial, oct. 1986, ou du même: Appel à des changements radicaux, Foi et développement, n° 243-244, juin-juillet 1996.).

En entamant cette cinquième lecture (1967. *Populorum Progressio*, introduction par Vincent COSMAO. Éd. du Centurion. pp. 9 à 48. 1977. En relisant *Populorum Progressio* 10 ans après, Foi et développement, n° 45, mars 1977. 1982. Le sujet du développement, en relisant *Populorum Progressio* 15 ans après, Foi et développement, n° 98, juin juillet 1980; *Nigrizia* (Vérone) octobre 1982. 1987. *Populorum Progressio* 20 ans après, Foi et développement, n° 146, janvier 1987.) de l'encyclique de Paul VI, je suis frappé, une fois de plus, par son actualité politique autant que théologique. Ne pouvant ratisser tout le texte pour y mettre en évidence quelques uns de ses mots clés qui résonnent dans le contexte actuel, je me contenterai de quelques prises de vue sur l'actualité internationale relue à la lumière de l'encyclique.

La question sociale est aujourd'hui mondiale

(Il avait été précisé à l'époque que les titres et sous-titres faisaient partie du texte. Je me souviens

avoir pu le faire valoir en assemblée générale de la Commission pontificale Justice et paix face à un collègue qui me faisait remarquer que le mot planification n'était pas dans l'encyclique.)

«Le développement des peuples, tout particulièrement de ceux qui s'efforcent d'échapper à la faim, à la misère, aux maladies endémiques, à l'ignorance; qui cherchent une participation plus large aux fruits de la civilisation, une mise en valeur plus active de leurs qualités humaines; qui s'orientent avec décision vers leur plein épanouissement, est considéré avec attention par l'Église. Au lendemain du deuxième Concile œcuménique du Vatican, une prise de conscience renouvelée des exigences du message évangélique lui fait un devoir de se mettre au service des hommes pour les aider à saisir toutes les dimensions de ce grave problème et pour les convaincre de l'urgence d'une action solidaire en ce tournant décisif de l'histoire de l'humanité» (2).

Après avoir annoncé la création, parmi les organes centraux de l'Église, d'une commission pontificale pour «susciter dans tout le peuple de Dieu la pleine connaissance du rôle que les temps actuels réclament de lui de façon à promouvoir le progrès des peuples plus pauvres, à favoriser la justice sociale entre les nations, à offrir à celles qui sont moins développées une aide telle qu'elles puissent pourvoir elles mêmes et pour elles mêmes à leur progrès», fut lancé un «appel solennel à une action concertée pour le développement solidaire de l'humanité» (2).

À l'Eure de l'interdépendance entre les peuples

Pour saisir la densité de ces deux passages que j'ai tenu à citer longuement, il faut se souvenir que, dans le «champ du développement» (L'usage faisant loi en matière de langage, je suis obligé d'employer ce mot développement bien que sa polysémie multiforme et contradictoire le rende à la limite insignifiant. Pour limiter les dégâts, je l'emploie sous guillemets quand il est encore susceptible de signifier ce à quoi je pense en l'employant), on en était alors à laide des riches aux pauvres, à peine au transfert de techniques ou de savoir faire, à la fin d'une «décennie du développement qui s'était fixé pour objectif le transfert de 0,7% du PIB des pays industrialisés aux pays sous développés. A peu près personne n'y croyait et la grande majorité des économistes, patentés ou non, considéraient le sous développement comme un simple retard sur la voie du progrès linéaire vers la société de consommation (ROSTOW, W. W. Les étapes de la croissance économique, 1960).

L'interdépendance de toutes les populations, de tous les peuples, de toutes les nations, qui était à l'horizon des propos de Lebrat comme de Paul VI, apparaissait déjà comme une réalité dont on commençait à comprendre que l'objet de la politique internationale était de la transformer en solidarité voulue, organisée, et vécue. Elle n'avait et n'a bien sûr rien à voir avec la mondialisation devenue le nouveau mythe ou le nouveau fatum (destin) qui bloque toute pensée. L'interdépendance est le tissu de relations, de dépendances plus ou moins réciproques mais réelles, qui se tricotent depuis des siècles, voire des millénaires, entre les groupes humains au fur et à mesure que leurs différences de compétences ou de spécialisations les rendent potentiellement ou nécessairement complémentaires les uns des autres, que ce soit par le commerce, la négociation ou la guerre.

Les aspirations de nos contemporains

La mondialisation dont on nous rebat les oreilles, en réseaux ou par pôles, finit par n'être rien d'autre qu'un discours idéologique destiné à camoufler les arrangements qui se concoctent entre agents de la bulle financière pour faire entrer l'économie réelle dans les réseaux de leurs échanges abstraits. Dans le discours de Paul VI sur la mondialité, il était question des «aspirations des hommes».

«Être affranchi de la misère, trouver plus sûrement leur subsistance, la santé, un emploi stable; participer davantage aux responsabilités, hors de toute oppression, à l'abri de situations qui offensent leur dignité d'homme; être plus instruits; en un mot, faire, connaître et avoir plus, pour être plus: telle est l'aspiration des hommes d'aujourd'hui, alors qu'un grand nombre d'entre eux sont condamnés à vivre dans des conditions qui rendent illusoire ce désir légitime. Par ailleurs, les peuples parvenus depuis peu à l'indépendance rationnelle éprouvent la nécessité d'ajouter à cette liberté politique une croissance autonome et digne, sociale non moins qu'économique, afin d'assurer à leurs citoyens leur plein épanouissement humain et de prendre la place qui leur revient dans le concert des nations» (6).

Conjuguer indépendance e'interdépendance

Si, au tournant des années 60-70, la résistance aux perspectives qu'ouvraient Lebreton, Paul VI, puis les porte parole du tiers monde, pouvait s'expliquer par la hantise de certains devant les planifications centralisées dont on savait pourtant déjà l'échec plus que prévisible ou par l'allergie des autres, ou des mêmes, devant toute régulation du marché dont on sait pourtant qu'il n'a jamais fonctionné sans normes, il est facilement compréhensible qu'au moment où les capitaux qui se déplacent quotidiennement d'une devise à l'autre représentent quarante ou cinquante fois la valeur des biens et services échangés à l'échelle du monde, il faudrait bien imaginer autre chose que le «quart» à risque, au sens maritime du mot, pour gérer la «mondialisation des supergrands». Mais ceux ci ont peut être fait leur temps. Si les 500 premières entreprises américaines pesaient 20% de l'économie américaine en 1970, elles n'en représentent plus que 10% aujourd'hui.

«La mondialisation et les technologies de l'information signent sans doute la mort de l'opposition entre le 'grand' et le 'petit'. Les entreprises de demain, les futures maîtres du monde, seront celles qui auront marié l'indépendance et l'interdépendance. Leur atout, ce sera d'avoir réconcilié le 'local' et le 'global', le grand et le petit. 'Big and small', voilà ce qui est 'beautiful'» (Big, small, beautiful par Erik IZRAELEWICZ, Le Monde Économie 11/02/97, p. 1).

Pour Paul VI, il était clair que la prise en compte de la mondialité de l'économie et de la vie en société impliquait son organisation. Dans la ligne de Jean XXIII, il en appelait à «une autorité mondiale efficace: cette collaboration internationale à vocation mondiale requiert des institutions qui la préparent, la coordonnent et la régissent jusqu'à constituer un ordre juridique universellement reconnu» (78). Et, jetant un défi aux sceptiques, il ajoutait: «Certains estimeront utopiques de telles espérances. Il se peut que leur réalisme fût en défaut et qu'ils n'aient pas perçu le dynamisme d'un monde qui veut vivre plus fraternellement» (79).

Construire un monde solidaire

Ce défi vaudrait aussi ex post pour tous ceux qui constataient naguère avec soulagement dans leur lucidité réaliste l'échec du projet d'instauration d'un Nouvel Ordre Économique International négocié, c'est-à-dire politiquement élaboré et mis en œuvre. Il y en avait outre mers comme outre Atlantique. Viendra peut être un jour où l'on finira par comprendre qu'il ne faudra pas «inévitamment choisir entre une économie performante qui instrumentalise ses acteurs et une économie au service de l'homme condamnée à un déclin inexorable dans le concert des nations» (LORMEAU Patricia, Économie, la part du choix, Le Monde 07/02/97.).

A la différence d'autres encycliques, *Populorum Progressio* n'est pas un discours scientiste sur ce que devraient être les sociétés ou sur la manière dont elles doivent se construire. Partant de l'observation, impliquée, sur le terrain, en vue d'en dégager les «besoins et possibilités», le discours s'ouvre à tâtons à ce qu'il faudrait faire parce que c'est nécessaire: «Construire un monde où tout homme, sans exception de race, de religion, de nationalité, puisse vivre une vie pleinement

humaine, affranchie des servitudes qui lui viennent des hommes et d'une nature insuffisamment maîtrisée; un monde où la liberté ne soit pas un vain mot» (47).

C'est dans ce contexte que vient la mise en garde contre le refus de l'organisation de la solidarité: «le superflu des pays riches doit servir aux pays pauvres. La règle qui valait autrefois en faveur des proches doit s'appliquer aujourd'hui à la totalité des nécessiteux du monde. Les riches en seront d'ailleurs les premiers bénéficiaires. Sinon leur avarice prolongée ne pourrait que susciter le jugement de Dieu et la colère des pauvres, aux imprévisibles conséquences» (49). Cette objurgation ne vient pas au hasard d'une rédaction. Elle était déjà dans la première partie sur l'état du problème «pour un développement intégral de l'homme».

En conformité à la destination universelle des biens

«Il est, certes, des situations dont l'injustice crie vers le ciel. Quand des populations entières, dépourvues du nécessaire, vivent dans une dépendance telle qu'elle leur interdit toute initiative et responsabilité, toute possibilité aussi de promotion culturelle et de participation à la vie sociale et politique, grande est la tentation de repousser par la violence de telles injures à la dignité humaine» (30).

Ne serait ce que par cette mise en alerte solennelle, l'encyclique se situe bien dans son temps, tout en réaffirmant les positions chrétiennes ou judéo chrétiennes fondamentales, élaborées au IV^e siècle, sur la destination universelle des biens et qui correspondent tellement à la problématique de ce temps, qu'elles ont trouvé dans le discours international, à l'occasion des conférences sur le droit de la mer, une formulation nouvelle: «le patrimoine commun de l'humanité».

Même si cette vérité première est loin d'être effectivement prise en compte et surtout mise en œuvre dans l'organisation des sociétés, il n'en faut pas moins continuer à l'affirmer, voire à l'asséner, car elle est constitutive, non seulement de la foi chrétienne, mais des conditions de l'existence humaine. «Emplissez la terre et soumettez la (Gn, 1,28). La Bible, dès sa première page, nous enseigne que la terre est pour l'homme, à charge pour lui d'appliquer son effort intelligent à la mettre en valeur et, par son travail, à la parachever pour ainsi dire à son service. Si la terre est faite pour fournir à chacun les moyens de sa subsistance et les instruments de son progrès, tout homme a donc le droit d'y trouver ce qui lui est nécessaire. Tous les autres droits, quels qu'ils soient, y compris ceux de propriété et de libre commerce, y sont subordonnés ils n'en doivent donc pas entraver, mais bien au contraire faciliter la réalisation et c'est un devoir social grave et urgent de les ramener à leur finalité première» (22).

Vocation a la croissance

Tout le texte de Paul VI est sous tendu par une dynamique théologique porteuse de souffle et de sens qui lui donne parfois un ton d'épopée. «Communiant aux meilleures aspirations des hommes et souffrant de les voir insatisfaites, (l'Église) désire les aider à atteindre leur plein épanouissement et c'est pourquoi elle leur propose ce qu'elle possède en propre: une vision globale de l'homme et de l'humanité» (13).

Promouvoir tout homme et tout l'homme

Ce qui est proposé ici, ce n'est pas un savoir ou un savoir faire, c'est une vision, une perspective qui donne sens et espérance au monde. «Le développement ne se réduit pas à la simple croissance économique. Pour être authentique, il doit être intégral, c'est dire promouvoir tout

homme et tout l'homme» (14). C'est ici qu'est ensuite cité, et c'est la seule fois, «l'éminent expert», Lebret (L. J. LEBRET, *Dynamique concrète du développement*, Paris, Économie et humanisme. Les Éditions ouvrières, 1961, p. 28.).

C'est la vocation collective de l'humanité à construire les conditions de son existence humaine qui est ici mise en valeur dans quelques passages dont la prise en compte de la relation à Dieu, Créateur de créateurs et du «Christ qui nous appelle tous à participer en fils à la vie du Dieu vivant, Père de tous les hommes» (21), n'exclut pas une lecture laïque ou humaniste qui laisserait en suspens les références chrétiennes, tout en acceptant le signifié humain, universel.

«Dans le dessein de Dieu, chaque homme est appelé à se développer, car toute vie est vocation. Dès la naissance est donné à tous en germe un ensemble d'aptitudes et de qualités à faire fructifier: leur épanouissement, fruit de l'éducation reçue du milieu et de l'effort personnel, permettra à chacun de s'orienter vers la destinée que lui propose son créateur. Doué d'intelligence et de liberté, il est responsable de sa croissance comme de son salut. Aidé, parfois gêné par ceux qui l'éduquent et l'entourent, chacun demeure, quelles que soient les influences qui s'exercent sur lui, l'artisan principal de sa réussite ou de son échec: par le seul effort de son intelligence et de sa volonté chaque homme peut grandir en humanité, valoir plus, être plus» (15).

L'homme, créateur de son propre développement

Artisans, agents, acteurs, sujets, créateurs de leur développement, qu'il s'agisse des hommes, des groupes ou des peuples, ces expressions qui ne sont plus guère contestées, viennent à la fois de ce qui a été vécu, observé sur le terrain dans les tentatives d'auto développement ou de développement endogène et des propos de *Populorum Progressio* qui venaient aussi du même terrain. Cette révolution épistémologique et anthropologique, qu'on pourrait appeler «post marxiste» ou, pour être plus précis «postmat» ou post structuraliste», est une des lignes de force de ces dernières décennies.

Là où il allait de soi que la transformation des modes ou des rapports de production modifiait les états de conscience, là où le sujet n'était plus qu'un présupposé ou un fantasme, on ne peut plus ne pas reconnaître que c'est la transformation des états de conscience qui permet la transformation des systèmes de production ou qu'un des critères du développement est que ses acteurs deviennent capables, non seulement de faire ce qu'ils disent, mais aussi de dire ce qu'ils font, c'est dire de l'interpréter. Il faut continuer à lire ce qu'écrit Paul VI: «Cette croissance n'est pas facultative, ... (elle) constitue comme un résumé de nos devoirs» (16).

Un humanisme transcendant

Nous sommes bien au-delà de l'aide ou du transfert de techniques à quoi se limitait encore à l'époque l'action pour le développement. C'est un autre monde qui s'ouvre, non un monde de rêve mais un monde à construire dans la ligne de ce que Lebret, dans son dernier ouvrage, posthume, appellera «développement révolutionnaire solidaire».

«Si la poursuite du développement demande des techniciens de plus en plus nombreux, elle exige encore plus des sages de réflexion profonde, à la recherche d'un humanisme nouveau qui permette à l'homme moderne de se retrouver lui-même, en assumant les valeurs supérieures d'amour, d'amitié, de prière et de contemplation. Ainsi pourra s'accomplir en plénitude le vrai développement qui est le passage, pour chacun et pour tous, de conditions moins humaines à des conditions plus humaines» (20).

On voit se déployer ici une foi en l'homme en acte de création, ou auto création, collective, un humanisme qui n'était guère dans l'air du temps: le mot n'est d'ailleurs employé qu'affecté d'un qualificatif, transcendant (16), nouveau (20), vrai (42), universel (72). Dans ce dernier cas, à propos des experts en développement, il est précisé que «la civilisation qui les a formés contient certes des éléments d'humanisme universel, mais elle n'est ni unique ni exclusive et ne peut être importée sans adaptation. Les agents de ces missions auront à cœur de découvrir, avec son histoire, les composantes et les richesses culturelles du pays qui les accueille».

Une vraie sagesse

Que d'erreurs, facteurs de sous développement, auraient pu être évitées si cette prise de conscience «qui a une voix nouvelle pour notre époque» (47) avait été moins tardive. Devenu économiste à un moment où beaucoup de «chrétiens sociaux» en étaient encore, comme il disait, au «social palliatif», Lebret était en train de devenir le «sage» (20) attentif à la déstructuration encore que je ne me souviens pas s'il employait ce mot des sociétés, des cultures, des civilisations sous l'effet de la pénétration de la civilisation scientifique et technique qui, par ailleurs, représentait le progrès.

Quand il venait au Sénégal (1958-1964) comme conseiller de Mamadou Dia, Premier Ministre du passage à l'indépendance, pour la préparation du premier plan de développement, un livre circulait qui posait admirablement le problème dramatique d'une acculturation difficilement maîtrisable par ceux qui la subissaient: «L'aventure ambiguë» de Cheikh Hamidou Kane (Julliard 1962). Celui-ci fut ministre de Dia et, par là même, interlocuteur de Lebret qui sut le reconnaître comme tel. «Il y a cent ans, notre grand père, en même temps que tous les habitants de ce pays, a été réveillé un matin par une clameur qui montait du fleuve. Il a pris son fusil et, suivi de toute l'élite, s'est précipité sur les nouveaux venus. Son cœur était intrépide et il attachait plus de prix à la liberté qu'à la vie. Notre grand père ainsi que son élite ont été défaits.»

«Pourquoi? Comment? Les nouveaux venus seuls le savent, il faut le leur demander; il faut aller apprendre chez eux l'art de vaincre sans avoir raison. Au surplus le combat n'a pas cessé encore. L'école étrangère est la forme nouvelle de la guerre que nous font ceux qui sont venus et il faut y envoyer notre élite en attendant d'y pousser tout le pays. Il est bon qu'une fois encore l'élite précède. S'il y a un risque, elle est la mieux préparée pour le conjurer; parce qu'elle est la plus fermement attachée à ce qu'elle est. S'il est un bien à en tirer, il faut que ce soit elle qui l'acquière la première» (Ibid. p. 52.). A trente ans et quelques, Cheikh, comme nous l'appelions amicalement, était déjà un Sage Africain. Son livre fut vendu à cent mille exemplaires dans le monde entier et il attendit 1995 pour publier le second (Les gardiens du temple, Stock, Paris, voir le Monde 09/07/96.) dont l'interprétation sera plus difficile pour ceux qui n'ont pas vécu les événements de 1962 à Dakar.

Une nouvelle aventure

«L'aventure ambiguë» évoquait admirablement les problèmes de société dont la prise de conscience fut à l'origine de l'approche du développement qui fut appelée «animation» en Afrique, en tension avec la planification, «conscientisation» au Brésil. Ce fut le début d'une aventure qui a pris de l'ampleur à l'échelle du monde et qui se poursuit, même si on n'en parle guère dans les médias, encore qu'à l'occasion du récent congrès mondial du «micro crédit», formule qui semble avoir été inventée au Bangladesh (Grameen Bank), elle ait eu presque droit à la une de certains journaux: la prise en charge par les populations de leur propre développement. Et nous retrouvons Populorum Progressio.

«La tâche pourrait sembler impossible dans les régions où le souci de la subsistance

quotidienne accapare toute l'existence de familles incapables de concevoir un travail susceptible de préparer un avenir moins misérable. Ce sont pourtant ces hommes et ces femmes qu'il faut aider, qu'il faut convaincre d'opérer eux mêmes leur propre développement et d'en acquérir progressivement les moyens. Cette œuvre commune n'ira certes pas sans effort concerté, constant et courageux. Mais que chacun en soit bien persuadé, il y va de la vie des peuples pauvres, de la paix civile dans les pays en vole de développement et de la paix du monde» (55).

Ici l'encyclique apparaît vraiment prophétique, au sens biblique du mot, c'est dire en lecture des signes des temps, et au sens courant de prévision de ce qui advient ou survient dans l'histoire en train de se faire. Comme disait encore C. H. Kane, «La civilisation est une architecture de réponses. Le bonheur n'est pas fonction de la masse des réponses mais de leur répartition. Il faut équilibrer».

Programmes et planification

La planification n'avait pas bonne presse dans les années 60 même quand elle fut considérée comme une «ardente obligation». Si on n'en était pas encore venu, dans l'orthodoxie néo libérale, à exalter le marché comme la seule libération possible des énergies créatives ou innovatrices en vue du décollage et de l'entrée en développement des pays sous développés, on y allait tout droit à partir de l'enlisement du Nouvel Ordre Économique International. Le débat sous-jacent était idéologique, c'est dire irrationnel et il tournait facilement à la guerre de religions.

Les interventions de Le Bret dans les pays qui firent appel à lui (Brésil, Colombie, Liban, Sénégal, etc.) s'inscrivirent toutes dans le cadre de préparation de plans de développement, sur la base de l'observation, de l'enquête et de l'analyse approfondie des besoins et possibilités, et non à partir de schémas ou modèles théoriques considérés comme reproductibles ou universalisables.

«La situation exige des programmes concertés. Un programme est en effet plus et mieux qu'une aide occasionnelle laissée à la bonne volonté de chacun. Il suppose: études approfondies, fixation des buts, détermination des moyens, regroupement des efforts pour répondre aux besoins présents et exigences prévisibles. Bien plus, il dépasse les perspectives de la croissance économique du progrès social: il donne sens et valeur à l'œuvre à réaliser. En aménageant le monde, il valorise l'homme» (50).

La tension maintenue entre la planification, les programmes et la liberté responsable ne relève pas du rêve. On la retrouve bien dans les débats d'aujourd'hui sur la mondialisation et la flexibilité, même s'ils tournent parfois au surréalisme. L'une et l'autre devront bien être gérées sauf à laisser la «bulle financière» décider de tout au risque de devoir en revenir au troc, ce qui était naguère encore le cas pour une part importante du commerce international (accords de compensation). Mais c'est toujours en avant qu'il faut chercher les solutions. La condition d'un avenir réside dans la mise en œuvre progressive, dans la négociation, donc dans une démocratie généralisée, d'une politique internationale digne de ce nom.

Après Jean XXIII, Paul VI, nous l'avons vu, parfait d'une autorité mondiale à construire. On a vu récemment le temps qu'il a fallu pour négocier le passage du GATT (Accord Général sur le Commerce et les Tarifs) à l'OMC (Organisation Mondiale du Commerce) et on devine déjà le temps qu'il faudra pour roder celle ci. Mais depuis la disparition du bloc soviétique, seule l'organisation d'autres groupes, pôles ou réseaux permettra d'éviter que tous doivent se soumettre au seul supergrand qui demeure en lice. Mais il y faudra un surcroît de démocratie, de planification et donc de négociation. Est ce impossible, impensable? Ce qui est nouveau peut-être, c'est que ce qui devra se faire sans qu'on puisse savoir comment car il n'y a pas de modèle il n'est pas exclu que ce soit pensable comme tâche pour l'humanité.

Équité dans les relations commerciales

«Les efforts, même considérables, qui sont faits pour aider au plan financier et technique les pays en voie de développement, seraient illusoires si leurs résultats étaient partiellement annulés par le jeu des relations commerciales entre pays riches et pays pauvres. La confiance de ces derniers serait ébranlée s'ils avaient l'impression qu'une main leur enlève ce que l'autre leur apporte» (56). «Trade, not aid!» commençait on à dire à l'époque.

Une économie d'échange

Dans la ligne de la dénonciation de la détérioration des termes de l'échange au détriment des pays producteurs de produits primaires, conséquence inexorable du progrès technique, Paul VI soulignait la nécessité d'aller au delà du libéralisme. «La règle du libre échange ne peut plus à elle seule régir les relations internationales quand les conditions deviennent trop inégales de pays à pays: les prix qui se forment librement sur le marché peuvent entraîner des résultats iniques. Il faut le reconnaître: c'est le principe fondamental du libéralisme, comme règle des échanges, qui est ici mis en question» (58).

«Ce qui était vrai du juste salaire individuel l'est aussi des contrats internationaux: une économie d'échange ne peut plus reposer sur la seule loi de libre commerce qui engendre trop souvent, elle aussi, une dictature économique. La liberté des échanges n'est équitable que soumise aux exigences de la justice sociale» (59). Ce qui pouvait encore à l'époque relever du vœu pieux s'impose aujourd'hui à l'analyse et à l'organisation des relations internationales: le marché n'a jamais fonctionné, ne fonctionne jamais sans régulations. Certes les normes comme les lois sont toujours transgressées. Cela ne veut pas dire que l'on puisse s'en passer. Il faut, au contraire, toujours les ajuster.

Un partenariat authentique entre peuples riches et peuples pauvres

Si des carcans rigides, comme des plans coercitifs, peuvent étouffer les libertés, il n'y a ni progrès, ni même humanisation sans contraintes, sans interdits. C'est en s'en imposant qu'à longueur de millénaires l'homme s'est fait homme; n'étant pas régulé par ses instincts, il est contraint à se réguler lui même, collectivement.

«Sans abolir le marché de concurrence, il faut le maintenir dans des limites qui le rendent juste et moral et donc humain. Dans le commerce entre économies développées et sous développées, les situations sont trop disparates et les libertés réelles trop inégales. La justice sociale exige que le commerce international, pour être humain et moral, rétablisse entre partenaires au moins une certaine égalité des chances. Cette dernière est un but à long terme. Mais, pour y parvenir, il faut dès maintenant créer une réelle égalité dans les discussions et négociations. Ici encore des conventions internationales à rayon suffisamment vaste seraient utiles: elles poseraient des normes générales en vue de régulariser certains prix, de garantir certaines productions, et soutenir certaines industries naissantes» (61).

Ce que les pays industrialisés sont amenés à réaliser entre eux, il leur faudra bien, avec le temps, l'élargir à l'échelle du monde. C'est R. Mac Namara qui disait un jour que l'éradication de la pauvreté absolue constituait pour la communauté internationale «un devoir social et moral grave».

Restituer à l'économie et à la politique leur dimension éthique

On ne pourra pas indéfiniment penser ou faire comme si on pensait que l'économie comme

la politique est nécessairement amoral. L'économie est une science humaine et les lois économiques, comme les lois naturelles, sont destinées à être transgressées. Comment faire tenir en l'air le plus lourd que l'air? L'esprit humain n'avance qu'en falsifiant les lois qui s'imposent à lui ou qu'il s'impose.

Les rapports sociaux, comme les approches de la vérité, sont toujours, au delà de ce qu'on peut en dire, infiniment complexes. Ce dont il s'agit c'est de toujours mieux en saisir les connexions et les interactions pour mieux les transformer, car ils ne sont jamais ce qu'il serait souhaitable qu'ils soient. Aucun discours n'y change rien. Ce qui importe c'est toujours la négociation des contradictions, des conflits et la négociation est l'acte politique par excellence.

Dans le film «Microcosmos» on voit un bousier ou scarabée coprophage rouler sa boule d'excréments de mammifères, boule beaucoup plus grande que lui. Or voici que la boule est coincée sur une épine: les astuces qu'essaie le bousier avant d'arriver enfin à dégager sa pitance sont impressionnantes et donnent à penser qu'il est «intelligent». L'humanité, aujourd'hui, roule aussi sa boule, sa «bulle financière» qui pèse quarante à cinquante fois toutes les richesses qu'elle produit pour assurer sa subsistance ou son mieux être. Arrivera elle à la décoincer ne serait ce qu'en la dégonflant? Pourra elle encore dire comme Guillaumet qui s'était sauvé des Andes: «Ce que j'ai fait jamais une bête ne l'aurait fait»?

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*** Par Vincent Cosmao**

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Entamant sa cinquième lecture de *Populorum Progressio*, Vincent Cosmao en montre l'actualité pour éclairer la question sociale de notre temps. Il organise sa réflexion autour de quatre points fondamentaux: la mondialisation, la croissance, la planification et l'équité des relations commerciales.

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L'élaboration de *Populorum Progressio* a été mise en route au moment de la première Conférence des Nations Unies sur le Commerce et le Développement (CNUCED, Genève 1964) où Lebreton, porte parole de la délégation du Saint Siège lançait l'idée de l'instauration d'un Nouvel Ordre Économique International. C'est dans la foulée de sa participation intensive à la conférence de Genève où il fut, avec Che Guevara, l'intervenant le plus applaudi en séance plénière, que Lebreton se mit au travail pour écrire le projet que Paul VI lui avait demandé pour un document sur le développement des peuples.

Comme l'écrivait Éric Sottas, actuel président du Centre Lebreton, dans un article d'Économie et Humanisme en 1986: «Lebreton ne se définit pas comme un diplomate traditionnel mais davantage comme le porte parole de groupes défavorisés dont les besoins et les aspirations impliquent une réforme tant conceptuelle que pratique du système international et de l'Église catholique. Si ces discours ont eu un tel écho, c'est précisément parce que Lebreton avait su percevoir l'importance des enjeux et dégager des perspectives de réforme et de transformation de la société» (Il Le Père Lebreton et la CNUCED, Éric Sottas, Économie et Humanisme, n° spécial, oct. 1986, ou du même: Appel à des changements radicaux, Foi et Développement, n° 243-244, juin-juillet 1996.).

En entamant cette cinquième lecture (1967. *Populorum Progressio*, introduction par Vincent COSMAO. Éd. du Centurion. pp. 9 à 48. 1977. En relisant *Populorum Progressio* 10 ans après, Foi et développement, n° 45, mars 1977. 1982. Le sujet du développement, en relisant *Populorum Progressio* 15 ans après, Foi et développement, n° 98, juin juillet 1980; Nigrizia (Vérone) octobre 1982. 1987. *Populorum Progressio* 20 ans après, Foi et développement, n° 146,

janvier 1987.) de l'encyclique de Paul VI, je suis frappé, une fois de plus, par son actualité politique autant que théologique. Ne pouvant ratisser tout le texte pour y mettre en évidence quelques uns de ses mots clés qui résonnent dans le contexte actuel, je me contenterai de quelques prises de vue sur l'actualité internationale relue à la lumière de l'encyclique.

Secularism in Africa

Aylward Shorter, MAfr.

INTRODUCING THE PROBLEM

“Africans are notoriously religious” (Mbiti, John S., *African Religions and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1969, p. 1). These opening words of Professor Mbiti’s classic work *African Religions and Philosophy*, first published 30 years ago, are just as notorious as the African religiosity they purport to describe and they still correspond to most people’s idea of the African reality. The picture is one of ancient religious traditions still flourishing, of Islam dominating huge swathes of the African continent, of Christians in their first fervour, of new religious movements proliferating. In contrast to this religiously edifying vision, Euro-America is deemed to be the home of a relentless and inexorable secularism. Western Christians fantasise about a future in which Africa will be among the last bastions of religion on earth, and from where a reverse mission may one day arise, with Africans setting forth to re-evangelise the West.

In spite of all this, Pope John Paul II, in his Post-Synodal Exhortation after the African Synod, *Ecclesia in Africa*, pointed to the growing threat of secularism in Africa. Although the subject scarcely received a mention in the speeches, messages and propositions of the Synod, the Pope wrote:

“... the rapid evolution of society has given rise to new challenges linked to the phenomena notably of family uprooting, urbanisation, unemployment, materialistic seductions of all kinds, a certain secularisation and an intellectual upheaval caused by the avalanche of insufficiently critical ideas spread by the media” (*Ecclesia in Africa*, 14 Sept. 1995, no. 76). Pope John Paul spoke in several other passages about the intrusiveness of the media, and also about the “temptation to individualism” so alien to Africa’s best traditions (ibid., no. 43).

More than 20 years ago, in 1972, the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers held a colloquium in Uganda on secularism. The meeting took place at Ggaba National Seminary, Kampala, and it produced a set of conclusions, outlining common problems connected with the subject in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. It also drew up a list of seven recommendations for the ten countries concerned (*Conclusions of the Gaba Colloquium on Secularism*, mimeographed 1972 [copy in the author’s possession]). What is interesting in this report is that the whole emphasis is placed on indifferentism and unbelief among the educated *élite*, rather than on materialism and the unsettling influences of urbanisation. Nothing whatever is said about the mass media. Consequently, the major recommendations concern religious education at third-level institutions. It is interesting to compare the concerns of this Vatican colloquium in 1972, with those of Pope John Paul II in 1995. The contrast is an eloquent commentary on developments in Africa during the last 20 years. So far from the African being inherently, if not “notoriously” religious, secularism is rapidly becoming a more generalised phenomenon in the African continent, spreading from a small circle of privileged individuals to a whole society undergoing a spectacular evolution.

Definitions and Understandings

Sacred and secular represent two different ways of experiencing the same reality. In themselves, they are not in competition or conflict. At the sacred level, reality is experienced as being under the governance of God, as the object of religious faith. The secular, on the other hand, is the same reality

construed as being accessible to humanity and under its control. The secular has nothing to do with the concept of “uncleanness”, and is therefore not intrinsically opposed to the sacred.

However, human societies which are technologically unsophisticated are tempted to allow the sacred to invade the secular sphere and to discourage human initiative or innovation. This has given rise to a positive understanding of secularisation or “secularity” in which a legitimate restoration of the secular sphere is observed to take place. Such a restoration was the preoccupation of the so-called “secular theologians” of the 1960’s, who proclaimed that humanity had now come of age, and that religious faith had nothing to fear from the full realisation of secular potential, and the ascendancy of the human.

Unfortunately, secularisation possesses a momentum of its own, and very soon develops into “secularism”, the situation in which the secular is observed to dominate or even replace the sacred. Secularism refers to a situation in which religious faith, for one reason or another, is felt to be superfluous. It is a state in which organised religion loses its hold both at the level of social institutions and at the level of human consciousness. As such, secularism is a datum of modern society. It is a world view which, in theory and/or practice, denies the immanence of God.

Secularism may stem from explicit unbelief, the denial of the existence of God or of any religious dimension to human life. Such unbelief is rarely the product of a formal, atheistic, rational philosophy. More often, it is an allegiance to a popular myth of science as the ultimate theory of everything, a conviction that the only truths are those which are accessible to scientific observation and experiment. Basically, it is a faith in unlimited human progress, apparently confirmed by the spectacular achievements of Western technology. This faith is, however already being shaken by the current ecological crisis, and the realisation that the maintenance of material standards in Europe and North America depends on the collapse and possible elimination of vital resources. (Cf. Ludwig Bertsch, “Inculturation in Europe’s Societal Situation: An Introduction”, in *Yearbook of Contextual Theologies*, Missio Institute, Aachen, 1993/4, p. 104).

Consumer materialism is nowadays the most common cause of secularism. Rather than formal unbelief, it is a religious indifferentism induced by the preoccupation with material things. As Mary Douglas points out, it is the product of a world of impersonal things, a world in which personal relationships are at a minimum and in which symbolism and ritual are discounted as forms of expression in the interpretation of reality. (Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, Barrie and Rockliff, London, 1970, p. 61). In a cosmos dominated by objects, rather than persons, it is impossible to bring moral pressure to bear on the human controllers, because there is so little person-to-person communication.

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, the missiologist, goes even further in his interpretation of secularism. In his numerous writings on the subject he argues that materialism not only leads to religious indifference, but that it constitutes a real “paganism”. (Cf. for example, Leslie Newbigin: *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, WCC, Geneva, 1986 and *The Open Secret*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1981). In practice, it is nothing other than the worship of what is not God. It induces a pseudo-religious attitude towards the material and towards a material understanding of reality. Secularism banishes religious belief to the private sphere of subjective opinion and elevates popular science alone to the level of public truth.

Some Popular Assumptions Concerning Secularism

An important part of the secular scientific myth is the belief in human progress. Technological advances over the last 150 years have convinced many people that secularism is the inevitable and final condition of the human race. It is popularly assumed that religion belongs to the childhood of humanity and that primitive people are naively pious, credulous and subject to the teaching of priests and magicians. With the progress of science and technology since the enlightenment, it is supposed that human beings have thrown off the shackles of religion. Such an assumption is based on popular, evolutionist theories of society. Evolutionary theories of secularism, however, must take account of a number of uncomfortable criticisms.

The most vigorous of these comes from the anthropologist, Mary Douglas, who maintains that secularism is not the exclusive outcome of modernity, but is “an age-old cosmological type ... a product of definable social experience, which need have nothing to do with urban life or modern science”. (Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, op.cit., p. ix). Douglas bases her critique on a hypothesis, which is not without its own critics, that society is defined by a limited number of basic, organisational criteria, a combination of which prompt people to adopt a pragmatic attitude to life, to discount metaphysics and to make no distinction between mind and matter — in other words, to be secular. Mary Douglas believes she can identify secular cosmologies among a number of tribal peoples, including the Pygmies of the Ituri Forest.

Mary Douglas expressed these opinions more than 25 years ago, and she might well be slightly less forthright in the last years of the 20th century. The spread of secularism from the Western world to other parts of the globe is difficult to deny. It is also difficult to deny that religious certainty was a general characteristic of pre-modern society, while religious doubt tends to characterise modern or post-modern society. Until the aftermath of the Second World War, religious faith was still interwoven with public life in the West, and it was only the scientific community and working-class milieu that tended to be a-religious. Mary Douglas was writing at about the same time as the Vatican colloquium on secularism in Africa, and before the rapid changes of the last two decades.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the phenomenon of secularism is not explained by a simple, evolutionist scheme, and that there have been secular cosmologies in pre-modern societies. This fact alone should make people less certain of the final triumph of secularism for all time. In any case, the protagonists of secularism, need to explain the persistence of organised religion in the secular environment.

Other voices are not lacking which proclaim that the secular society contains within itself the seeds of its own decline and dissolution. Both Peter Berger, the American sociologist of religion, and Lamin Sanneh, the African missiologist, believe that secularism should not be seen as a more formidable opponent than it is. (Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative, Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation*, London, 1980, p. 184; Lamin Sanneh, *Encountering the West, Christianity and the Global Cultural Process: The African Dimension*, Marshall Pickering, London, 1993, p. 225). Sanneh, in particular, sees the Western cultural project as afflicted by a moral relativism that renders it deeply flawed (Sanneh, op.cit., pp. 71, 235). Scepticism about the perennial character of modern secularism seems to be growing, and the future of secular culture may be less certain than its supporters imagine.

Secularism as Unbelief

The Vatican colloquium of August 1972, already alluded to, identified a secularism in Africa which largely took the form of unbelief among intellectuals and *élites* in universities and higher educational institutions. It arose, so the meeting concluded, from a dissatisfaction with organised

religion and was imported from abroad, being disseminated through the education system and the encounter with Western technology. Unbelief tended to arise in the minds of the educated and, increasingly, the semi-educated, because religious education had not kept pace with secular and academic education. Church leaders saw the universities and other institutes of third-level education as places that posed a danger to the faith of young *élites*.

This analysis of unbelief among the academic community is certainly not far from the truth. African universities are part of a secular tradition of higher learning that stems from the Enlightenment and from parent universities in Europe. Religious authority was seen as repressive and opposed to true academic freedom. Such freedom demanded an open mind, an agnosticism or methodological doubt. In matters of religious belief honesty was thought to consist in coming to no conclusion. This was conceived to be “rational” and “objective”, since religion was deemed to be subjective and scientifically untrustworthy.

The first generation of African university students were taught to scoff at organised religion and at religious authority. In the history of human thought the “ages of faith” were ignored or dismissed, as being hopelessly flawed. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that African academics prided themselves on their unbelief, and that African undergraduates hastened to disprove the existence of God as soon as they arrived on campus.

The situation was aggravated by the Church’s contestation with secular modernity. For a long time this was the principal agenda of Christian theology in the West. (Cf. Berger *op.cit.*, pp. 183-189; Bertsch, *op.cit.*, pp. 103-104). Then, as secularist unbelief showed no signs of weakening under the onslaught, but rather of exerting increasing pressure on the religious consciousness itself, the attempt was made to bargain with it and to strike a compromise. The attempt was made, through reductionism and accommodation, to make Christianity palatable to the secular consciousness. The end result of these theological gymnastics was to give academics the impression that Christian teachings were not worth fighting against. Theology was banished from the curriculum and the word became a synonym for irrelevance.

The Vatican colloquium of 1972 recommended a re-structuring of the Catholic Church, to make it relevant to African life. Was this already an adumbration of the small Christian communities which came into prominence at the AMECEA study conference of the following year? It also called for the spiritual guidance of university students and those in other institutions of higher learning, through the creation of chaplaincies. Finally, it requested a competent adult catechesis of the *élites* that made greater use of Scripture (cf. *Gaba Colloquium*, *Op.cit.*, pp. 1-2).

At the time of the colloquium, there were already chaplaincies in most universities of English-speaking Africa. There were also departments of Religious Studies, at an early stage of development, in several of them. In some universities, however, as was the case with Dar-es-Salaam, the prejudice against theology was too strong to allow such a department to come into existence, and it was asked whether religious studies could add anything to what the departments of history, literature and social science were already doing. In general, however, the last quarter of a century has witnessed a stronger religious presence at universities and institutions of higher learning, and with it, a certain erosion of academic unbelief.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Vatican colloquium, efforts have been made to bring religious education at the universities up to the level of secular education. This is done, not only through conferences and instructions at the various chaplaincies, but also through graduate and undergraduate associations, such as the Newman Association, Pax Christi, Young Christian Students, the Student Christian Movement and Student Christian Unions. It is also done very effectively

through the departments of Religious Studies, the specialised degree courses they offer and the religious options they provide in joint degree programmes. Finally, the Christian Churches and Islam have begun to sponsor their own faculties of theology and even their own private universities, where these are permitted by the State.

Even if the concept of the national university is still secular, religious affiliation and religious opinion occupy a more prominent position on these campuses than they did two decades ago. Some people would argue that it is a much healthier situation for religion to strive openly for the allegiance of the *élites* in a secular environment, than to face little or no challenge on its own home ground. All things considered, the Churches are probably now in a stronger position than they were, with regard to secular unbelief in academic circles. However, the emphasis of secularism has now shifted from unbelief to a religious indifferentism caused by consumer materialism, as we shall show in the next section.

Secularism as Consumer Materialism

Consumer materialism is the form of secularism most prevalent in the contemporary world, and the form which is rapidly appearing in Africa. It is the outcome of rapid technological change and is also strongly linked to wealth and the creation of wealth, since the affluent are the principal consumers. It is promoted by the electronic media, and it is associated with what has been called the global culture of “economism”. This is another way of referring to the neo-liberal, Euro-American technocracy. The indigenous cultures of the Non-Western world are powerless against the economic forces of Western capitalism. Economism has its roots in a Western culture that is intrinsically divisive and imperialist, based on the manipulation of technological power and inequality. It is a system which proclaims the overriding importance of the economic factor. It generates its own rituals and symbols and creates its own cultural myths of power, success, growth and prosperity. Economic issues prevail everywhere, especially in the media. Economic factors are assumed to be the main source of meaning and value, and virtue is defined by economic success, profitability, cost-effectiveness and growth.

The popular scientific myth views economics as a science, an explanation that is strictly and objectively true, a science that can change the world. The fact remains that economics deals with human motives and behaviour which are far from predictable.

The root-symbol of economism is the market, and the world is conceived as a series of interlinked markets. “Market” (like science itself) is a theory of ev-erything. Markets are characteristically held to be “free” and just, if left to operate according to their own impersonal laws. The truth is that markets are never free or just. They do nothing by themselves, but are static, until manipulated by human beings. This neo-liberal market ideology is, in fact, rooted in individualism or the logic of self-interest, popularly equated with rationality itself. Success is calculated in terms of economic growth, not in the equitable sharing of wealth. While countries grow richer, their poorer citizens become more numerous.

Economism claims universal legitimacy as a world culture. In reality, however, it is a movement of “anti-culture” which has no substance as a genuine cultural system at all. It results in cultural homogenisation and impoverishment. Paradoxically, the status of Christianity today as a world religion is largely due to the influence of Western economist culture. The Church has become the mirror and agent of economism and a vehicle of globalisation. Her missionaries unconsciously introduced secularism, by promoting a privatised, departmentalised religion, that does not effectively challenge the myths of economism (cf. Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, S.P.C.K., London, 1995, pp. 262-263).

The late Fr Pedro Arrupe, S.J., told the 1977 Synod of Bishops in Rome, that the Church must make “a fair and sober assessment of modern culture, however materialistic, irreligious and atheistic it may seem”, otherwise the faith will continue to be separated from real life (Pedro Arrupe, “Catechesis and Inculturation”, *AFER*, vol.20, no. 1, 1978, p. 32). The extreme reactions of restorationism and reductionism are fatal to religious belief. Christianity must not merely collaborate with modernity, but must surpass it or transcend it (cf. Berstch, op.cit., pp. 106, 109). The new evangelisation has to bring about a social transformation, in which social responsibility and solidarity replace economic rationalism as the dominant motivation. This, in turn, depends on an internal transformation within Christianity itself.

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Integral Evangelisation: Pre-Synodal Reflections

M. Amaladoss, S.J.

The Catholics in Asia are preparing for a Special Synod of Bishops focused on their continent. The theme has been chosen: *Jesus Christ the Saviour and his Mission of Love and Service in Asia: "... that they may have life and have it abundantly"*. The meaning and challenges of mission in the Asian context are therefore being discussed all over Asia. All the People of God are invited to contribute to this discussion. The following reflections on the theme of the Synod are offered as one contribution to the on going discussion. They aim at clarifying the horizon of understanding which conditions the interpretation of mission in Asia and elsewhere. They do not claim to be a summary either of the official documents or of Asian theology on the matter. They are personal reflections on what I think is the focus and manner of evangelisation in Asia.

The horizon of understanding in which we read and interpret a particular text or theme is important. For instance, if one starts with the idea that mission is primarily the transplantation of the Church in ever new areas then one is likely to perceive promotion of justice, inculturation and inter-religious dialogue as means towards this goal. Another who thinks that the aim of mission is to struggle with the poor for justice will not feel the need of sharing the Good News or of dialoguing with other religions.

Mission: One or Many?

The General Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in Taipei in 1974 described evangelisation as a threefold dialogue with the realities of Asia, namely its many poor peoples, its rich cultures, and its great religions. This may be interpreted to mean that the promotion of justice, inculturation and interreligious dialogue are different tasks of evangelisation. From such a perspective one could add to the list of tasks. Some would add 'proclamation', even specifying it further as 'direct proclamation', which supposes that the other tasks are 'indirect proclamations'. John Paul II, in his Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, chapter V, presents a long list of tasks as 'The Paths of Mission'. A missionary can engage in one or other task according to the need of the situation and his/her own competence.

Others however think that these various tasks mutually involve each other in such a way that together they constitute evangelisation or proclamation of the Good News. Evangelisation is not an activity that stands apart from them. One does not simply proclaim Jesus without proclaiming his Good News and entering into dialogue with the many dimensions of human reality, like religion, culture and the socio-economic situation, challenging them all to conversion. To say that they are mutually involving does not confuse them. They remain different activities. But they converge: one cannot be done adequately and authentically without also doing the others. This mutually involving character of liberation, inculturation and interreligious dialogue as integral dimensions of evangelisation has been pointed out by Asian theologians (cf. M. Amaladoss, "The Challenges of Mission Today" in *Trends in Mission. Toward the Third Millennium*. Ed. by William Jenkinson and Helene O'Sullivan, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991, p.364) and has been strongly affirmed recently by the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (Decree 2, 14-19).

One and Many

The Good News can be presented to free human beings only in a dialogical way that takes into

account their living situation. The Gospel comes as Good News particularly to the poor who live in unjust and oppressive situations. But they cannot be liberated from their poverty and oppression unless there is also a cultural transformation that challenges and changes the worldviews and value systems that underlie the oppressive economic, political and social systems. In a society where the same culture is shared by people of different faiths, cultural and social transformation can take place only when the Gospel enters into dialogue with the different religions, challenging prophetically their legitimating aspects and engaging their prophetic dynamism that can bring about change. Thus liberation involves transformation of culture and interreligious dialogue. Otherwise it remains mere social activism and does not become evangelising.

In taking shape in a culture the Gospel necessarily challenges elements of its worldview and value system that are oppressive, and seeks to transform them. But it cannot do so adequately without transforming the economic and socio-political ground that sustains that culture. Besides, the worldview and value system of a culture cannot be transformed without a transformative dialogue with the religions that provide legitimation by reference to the Ultimate. The dialogue of Gospel with culture therefore necessarily involves liberation and dialogue with other religions. Merely repressing the Gospel in a particular culture is a necessary first step, but is not evangelisation. It is a pity, of course, that even that first step is often not taken.

The dialogue of the Gospel with other religions will remain academic and even alienating if it does not contribute to the transformation of worldviews

In a society where the same culture is shared by people of different faiths, cultural and social transformation can take place only when the Gospel enters into dialogue with the different religions, challenging prophetically their legitimating aspects and encouraging their prophetic dynamism that can bring about change. Thus liberation involves transformation of culture and inter-religious dialogue.

and value systems and to the change of oppressive economic and socio-political structures. Interreligious dialogue is meaningful only when there is cultural and social transformation. Otherwise religions (and the Gospel) become alienating and oppressive, legitimating or at least tolerating unjust socio-cultural structures. Mission as proclamation of the Good News and call to conversion is meaningful only when it causes sociocultural and religious transformation. Otherwise it is empty and alienating.

Dialogue with cultures and religions and action for liberation have different formalities. But they constitute together one integral mission so that one cannot be done without the others. This does not mean that one person has to do every thing. These activities require different kinds of expertise and, at advanced levels, different people may be engaged in them. But they have meaning only when they are done together corporately, mutually influencing each other. Exclusive concentration on any one of them will not produce the desired fruit of an authentic and total conversion, leading to the emergence of the new human community that is God's Kingdom.

The Many as One

Mission is therefore a complex activity. But the complexity must not make us confuse the different identities of the various dimensions and the particular way in which they are interrelated. The Gospel is primarily preached to the poor as a good news of liberation. It is the message of the Reign of God which is manifested in a new humanity characterised by freedom and fellowship, love and justice. The call to conversion is an invitation, not only to personal transformation, but also to societal change. George Soares Prabhu points this out in an oftquoted passage:

*When the revelation of God's love (the Kingdom) meets its appropriate response in man's trusting acceptance of this love (repentance), there begins a mighty movement of personal and societal liberation which sweeps through human history. ("The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Vision of a New society", in *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*. Ed. by D.S. Amalorpavadass, Bangalore: NBCLC, 1981, p. 601).*

The process of this conversion and the building up of a new society involves a struggle, that is often seen in the Bible as a conflict with Mammon. Mammon's power is shown precisely in the structures of unfreedom and injustice that enslave people, particularly the poor. The call to conversion is therefore a call to liberation:

The vision of Jesus summons us to a ceaseless struggle against the demonic structures of unfreedom (psychological and sociological) erected by Mammon; and to a ceaseless creativity that will produce in every age new blue-prints for a society ever more consonant with the Gospel vision of man. Lying on the horizons of human history and yet part of it, offered to us as a gift yet confronting us as a challenge, Jesus' vision of a new society stands before us as an unfinished task, summoning us to a permanent revolution (ibid., p. 607).

That is why one can say that action for liberation or promotion of justice is the primary, though not the exclusive, focus of mission as proclamation of the Kingdom.

In the context of this struggle with Mammon, people are challenged to transform their worldviews and value systems as well as to purify their religious orientation and commitment.

If we look at what happens a little more closely, the process of evangelisation in the three cases is not the same. We speak the language of struggle with Mammon's forces of injustice and unfreedom. But with reference to cultures and religions, we speak rather of dialogue. The reason for this is that, while injustice and oppression are seen as sinful situations that have to be abolished, we see in cultures and religions, side by side with human sin and imperfection, also the signs and the presence of God's self revelation in the histories of peoples. While true and total liberation is not possible without the transformation of culture and the revitalisation of religion, the focus of the proclamation of the Good News is the building up of a new human community that is God's Kingdom. When we speak of integral dimensions, we cannot subordinate one to another. But we can see a certain structure among them.

The Church and the Kingdom

Evangelisation can be seen as integral also from another point of view. Speaking about the goal of evangelisation in the context of our experience in Asia, Asian theologians have also spelt it out as the promotion of the Kingdom and of the Church as its symbol and servant. (Cf. M. Amaladoss, "Evangelisation in Asia: A New Focus?" in *Making All Things New*, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990, pp. 103-120; "The Kingdom of God as the Goal of Mission," *Vaiharai* 1 (1996), pp. 277-292). The concrete goal one is able to pursue in a particular situation depends not only on the wishes of the evangeliser, but on the situation, on the freedom of God who ultimately invites people to the discipleship of Jesus, and on the freedom of the individuals or groups who listen to the Gospel. To call the process of evangelisation integral from the point of view of its goal means that whatever be the manner of response of those who hear the Gospel in a particular situation, everything is a contribution to the overall goal of evangelisation, namely the Kingdom. Some may become disciples of Jesus in or outside the community of the Church, others may be challenged to a personal conversion that makes them better human beings, more committed to love and justice, still others may be challenged to

transform their culture and revitalise their religion. In every case evangelisation is taking place, because the Kingdom is being built up. A too hasty identification of the Church with the Kingdom, making the Church the exclusive goal of evangelisation, does not take into account these articulations.

Similarly, we see a tendency to identify the Kingdom with Jesus. Jesus proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom. But sometimes one goes on to say that Jesus himself, as the Word of God, is the Good News and that he realises the Kingdom in himself. Therefore to proclaim Jesus is to proclaim the Kingdom. If responding to such proclamation in faith means doing what Jesus did, namely, love the other, especially the poor and the marginalised, struggle for justice and building community, then there is no problem. It is a faith that does justice. But if it means confessing faith in Jesus in an abstract manner which does not involve any real transformation of life and action, then it becomes a fundamentalist proclamation in the manner of some of the tele-evangelists, who offer Jesus as a personal saviour without conditions. This is not integral evangelisation.

Dialogue with cultures and religious and action for liberation have different formalities. But they constitute together one integral mission so that one cannot be done without the others. This does not mean that one person has to do every think. These activities require different kinds of expertise and, at advanced levels, different people may be engaged in them.

One consequence of evangelisation being integral is that, given its complex character and its dialogical process, it is ongoing. It is never finished. Just as the Church is always a pilgrim marching towards the fullness of the Kingdom, evangelisation is a continuing process. It is a constant call to conversion and to change and build up the human community. It needs ongoing discernment and commitment. As the world — people and cultures — is changing, the prophetic challenge of the Gospel too changes. As generation succeeds generation and new actors come on the scene, the challenge has to be repeated. That is why, from the point of view of integral evangelisation, one should speak of continuing evangelisation rather than of new evangelisation or re-evangelisation.

Integral Evangelisation

To think of evangelisation as integral is therefore to see its various dimensions as mutually interconnected in a holistic way. What one is able to do in a particular situation may be limited by the possibilities of the situation and by the charisma of the people who are evangelising. In a place where there is no real religious freedom, for example, all that one can do is witness to one's faith convictions in life. In every situation, the evangeliser(s) will have to discern possible courses of action and even priorities. As I have pointed out above, the will of God and the response of people are also factors in this discernment. For their part, the evangelisers are open and ready to engage in all the dimensions of evangelisation — that is, integral evangelisation. But it is possible that they limit their activity, not according to the signs of the times, but according to their own particular narrow perspective or ideology. Unfortunately this seems to happen rather often and is detrimental to integral evangelisation. Let us sample some — not all — cases when this may happen.

Some people are challenged by the poverty and oppression that the poor suffer from. They feel that religions, including Christianity, often legitimate oppression. Therefore they are on the whole negative to religion(s). They throw themselves heart and soul into the socio-political movements and struggles oriented to liberate the people. They perceive this as part of the ongoing struggle against Mammon. They see themselves as promoting the values of the Gospel and therefore as evangelisers. But they are not doing authentic evangelisation, which is integral, because they are ideologically limiting themselves to the economic and socio-political dimensions. I am not talking here about what someone is actually able to do in a particular situation, but rather of an intentional exclusion of any other dimension of evangelisation on ideological grounds.

In the opposite direction, some people think that real evangelisation is to make people, through Baptism, members of the Church as the only vehicle of salvation. Every other activity is seen as secondary or preparatory to it. Such activity also falls short of integral evangelisation. Salvation itself is seen as spiritual, individual and other worldly. It is basically made available through the sacraments. When salvation is seen in this way, then promotion of justice and dialogue with cultures and religions, even if they are engaged in, are not seen as integral to evangelisation. Therefore they are done half-heartedly or not at all. In such a situation, the Gospel is imported together with foreign cultural and cosmic religious structures. People then are not only culturally alienated in their own country but lose the possibility and credibility to challenge the local culture in view of its transformation, since they themselves have abandoned it and are seen as foreign. There is no interest in inculturation.

There is no real dialogue either with their own religious past, which is rejected as unChristian. But since the Christian rituals, especially in their contemporary, secular versions, do not meet the real needs of the people, people tend to live in two religious spheres simultaneously, when they do not simply pass over to some of the new religious movements. When they are not able to handle the complexity of their own religious needs and perspectives they can hardly dialogue evangelically with the believers of other religions. Similarly, becoming members of the Church is seen in ritual terms, so that no real transformation of life is demanded. In the early Church people had to change their way of life over a period before they qualified for Baptism. Today, people are first baptised, sometimes with mixed motives, and a change of life is hoped for in the future. And so people can continue to practice caste discrimination and yet be considered as Christians of good standing. The priests themselves seem to show the way in these matters. The lack of interest in inculturation and in creative, ongoing dialogue with other believers seems to indicate that their perspective of evangelisation is quite narrow and far from integral. I wonder whether even the drive towards a new evangelisation or re-evangelisation on the occasion of the Year 2000 goes beyond promoting personal conversion through renewal of the faith to include a drive towards authentic inculturation, interreligious dialogue and social transformation.

Proclamation and Dialogue

In the context of evangelisation people speak of proclamation and dialogue as different activities. Sometimes the two are even opposed to each other so that one has to opt for one. In the context of integral evangelisation, such opposition is incorrect. We can not oppose different dimensions of evangelisation that mutually involve each other. Since we cannot really proclaim the Gospel to people who are free without dialoguing with their own religious perspectives and since we cannot dialogue with another person's religion without prophetically challenging it in the name of the Gospel, while being ourselves open to the challenge of the other, proclamation is dialogical and dialogue is proclamational. The opposition between dialogue and proclamation comes from abstract definitions, not from evangelical praxis. In practice they are closely related.

Jesus proclaimed the Good News of liberation against the oppressive forces of Mammon. He sided with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised, the sinners and the publicans. He challenged the love of power and money and false and hypocritical religion. He presented the Church as a counter-cultural movement.

Following Jesus, we too engage in a conflict with Mammon in our proclamation of the Gospel. In this struggle, the other religions are seen as allies, not enemies. We seek to collaborate with them in the promotion of human and spiritual values and not to vanquish them (cf. John Paul II's talk to the leaders and representatives of other religions in Madras on 5 February, 1986. Text in *Origins* 15

(1986), p. 598. Also *The Pope Speaks to India*. Bombay: St Paul Publication, 1986, pp. 84f). As John Paul II has said, what unites the different religions is deeper and more divine than what separates them.

If it is the order of unity that goes back to creation and redemption and is therefore, in this sense, “divine,” such differences — and even religious divergences — go back rather to a “human” fact, and must be overcome in progress towards the realisation of the mighty plan of unity which dominates the creation (cf. Bulletin, The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 22 (1987), pp. 56-7).

Evangelisation is therefore directed not against other religions but against Mammon. In such a context it is not proper to oppose proclamation to dialogue and to suppose that we have to choose between them. On the contrary, integral evangelisation sees them as different dimensions that have a mutual influence on each other. The opposition between proclamation and dialogue can be understood only when the establishing of the Church as a religion is seen as the goal of evangelisation. The other religions then become the quarry from which the Church gathers its adherents. Such an opposition between religions is unevangelical.

A Quest for Harmony

Asian theologians project rather a vision of harmony:

The community of Christ’s disciples, as tiny minority among the teeming millions of Asia, as a “little flock” (*pusillus grex*), will never be able to do it alone. They are, with an open mind and a humble heart, to recognise in all sisters and brothers, of whatever faith conviction and culture, fellow wayfarers to God’s Reign. It is through a triple dialogue with cultures, with religions and with the poor (FABC I), through a mutually enriching interchange in its various modes and at various levels, not the least in the dialogue of life with people of other faiths and religious traditions, that Asian Christianity is to strive for human and cosmic harmony in Jesus Christ. (The Theological Advisory Commission of the FABC, *Asian Christian Perspectives on Harmony*, FABC Papers, 75, Hong Kong: 1996, p. 54).

One should not misunderstand this text as if it is a special recipe for the Churches in Asia because of their being tiny minorities in most countries. Though this experience may have given rise to a vision of harmony, the vision itself is equally valid for Churches all over the world, because it is not a special strategy in a particular situation, but an insight into the essential nature of integral evangelisation, which is seen as a quest for harmony.

Some people are challenged by the poverty and oppression that the poor suffer from. They feel that religions, including Christianity, often legitimate oppression. Therefore they are on the whole negative to religion(s). They throw themselves heart and soul into the socio-political movements and struggles oriented to liberate the people. They perceive this as part of the ongoing struggle against Mammon.

Conclusion

The Christians in Asia are particularly sensitive to the ongoing presence and action of the Spirit in the believers of other religions (cf. John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, pp. 28-29). This encourages them to an attitude of *kenosis* (self-emptying), dialogue, and service from which aggressivity and anxiety are absent. Such attitudes do not seem to be shared by people who do not share the same experience.

If evangelisation is seen as integral, then one must see it active in all its dimensions, even if

the action may not show equal dynamism and speed in every area. Just as evangelisation loses meaning and credibility if it does not go beyond social activism, it also loses relevance and credibility if it shows no interest in inculturation and in interreligious dialogue. I wonder whether any one has any right to alienate groups of people from their own culture and make them feel foreign in their own country in the name of evangelisation. And yet one does not see any real enthusiasm to build up authentic Local Churches, with their liturgy, theology, organisational structures and spirituality. There is a gap between profession and practice and efforts at inculturation seem blocked all along the way. People are not given the freedom to respond to the Good News with their own human and cultural resources. Attempts to dialogue with other religions and to reflect on its implications to our own beliefs and practices are looked at with suspicion and branded as syncretism. There is much talk about pluralism and communion. But attempts to take pluralism seriously are suspected of being relativistic. What finds favour is uniformity and conformity rather than communion. Is evangelisation under such circumstances credible? Perhaps the idea is still prevalent of evangelisation as saving souls through a sacramental system that is independent of social and cultural contexts. Today one would not say so. But one acts as if it were.

Integral evangelisation can be understood and practised only if we move, as Vatican II did, from looking on evangelisation as Church-extension to contemplating it as God's own mission in the world, with which we are called to collaborate, in particular as disciples of Jesus. The Church's mission has its origin in the mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In accordance with his plan for the whole universe, God "generously pours out, and never ceases to pour out, his divine goodness, so that he who is creator of all things might at last become 'all in all' (1 Cor 15:28)" (cf. *Ad Gentes*, n. 2). Salvation is not just individual, but social and cosmic and embraces all dimensions of the human (cf. Rom 8). The mission of the Son and of the Spirit and the mission of the Church are in furtherance and at the service of this mission. God's own mission is ongoing everywhere and at all times and embraces all aspects of reality, transforming them and leading them to the fullness that has been destined for them (cf. Eph 1:10).

I think that the real challenge for the Churches in Asia in the Third Millennium is to become authentic Local Churches — a task which they had set for themselves more than 20 years ago in the first assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in Taipei (1974), but which is still far from realisation (cf. Theological Advisory Commission of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, *Theses on the Local Church (FABC Papers, 60)*. Hong Kong: 1991). If we are credible and relevant witnesses to the Gospel, God's mission will find its own way of appropriate fulfilment. The Synod for Asia will be evangelically successful if, instead of getting lost in a rhetoric of numbers, it discerns the ongoing mission of God in Asia through a careful reading of the signs of the times and enables the Churches in Asia to be at the service of this mission by becoming authentically Asian in the perspectives of integral evangelisation.

Ref.: *Vidyajyoti*, Vol. 61, No. 4, April 1997.

Asian Realities Must Set Agenda for the Synod for Asia

Tokyo (UCAN) — In the Japanese Church's official response to the Lineamenta (outline) for the Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan has suggested that the Synod, expected to be held in 1998, be guided by the Asian context as determined by the Asian Church. The following excerpts from the document, dated 23 July 1997, include the final two sections on proposals for Synod topics and "A special proposal to the Holy See" in their entirety:

OFFICIAL RESPONSE OF THE JAPANESE CHURCH TO THE *LINEAMENTA*

INTRODUCTION

... After the Bishops of each Diocese received the Japanese translation of the *Lineamenta*, they studied (it) together with the priests of their Dioceses. ... However, though they had asked their priests for an answer to the questions of the *Lineamenta*, the reaction was that it was not possible to answer those questions. ... From the way the questions are proposed, one feels that the holding of the Synod is like an occasion for the central office to evaluate the performance of the branch offices. That kind of Synod would not be worthwhile for the Church in Asia. The judgement should not be made from a European framework, but must be seen on the spiritual level of the people who live in Asia. ...

Accordingly, the Bishops' Conference decided that they would prepare their own questions for the Japanese Church. ... They considered the more than 325 replies submitted by the Bishops themselves, the major seminaries, the theology faculties, religious congregations, individual priests and religious, councils of the laity, etc., and composed the Official Response of the Japanese Church that is given below.

I. REQUESTS OF THE JAPANESE CHURCH TO THE SYNODAL SECRETARIAT

Proposals concerning Methodology

Consideration of Asian countries without a common language

Among all the countries of Asia there is not one which has a native language 'ordinarily used by the Holy See'. ... To fail to take this fact into account and to hold the Special Assembly according to the same time schedule and methodology as those of Europe and America, etc. is ill-advised. ...

Use of a methodology suited to Asian spirituality

... Some sessions and activities should be included to work toward a united image and a new paradigm to include the varying realities and cultures of Asia, the differing mentalities and spiritual traditions. ...

The decision concerning the global direction of the Synod should not be made by the Roman Secretariat, but should be left to the Bishops from Asia. The choice of the Chairpersons of the

committees and small groups which are to direct the work of the Synod should also be left to the Bishops from Asia. They should follow their own sense of the process and the special needs of the assembly. ...

Use should be made of the fruits of FABC

For more than 25 years the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) has been involved with the reality of the Church in our countries and made important statements. We propose that the fruit of the work of FABC should be made good use of at the Synod. ...

Dividing into groups

At Synods up to the present, groups were formed according to the languages of the West. ... However, we request that for this Special Assembly for Asia the groups be divided not according to language, but according to themes or Religious Cultures (Islamic Culture, Hindu Culture, Hinayana Buddhist Culture, Mahayana Buddhist Culture, Confucian Culture, etc.).

Focus on relationship with other Asian religions

... What about considering ... not the global connection of Christianity with all the problems of Asia, but the relationship of Christianity with each religion and each culture? Unless we do so, we may end up only with abstract discussion and without anything concrete or useful that the Church of Asia can do for the realistic service of the Kingdom of God.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPOSING THE *INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS*

Christology

One finds in the *Lineamenta* a certain "defensiveness" and apologetic attitude. This makes the expressions presenting certain other theological positions clearly unfair and inadequate. This is especially clear in the section on Christology. This does not help the faith of Asian Christians. What is necessary is an open and spiritual Christology rooted in real life and alert to the problems of modern people. ...

Ecclesiology

... The central issues of "Service" and "Dialogue" developed by the FABC are two very important points for the Catholic Church in Asia which are not sufficiently stressed in the *Lineamenta*.

Soteriology

The theme of "Mission of Love and Serve" proposed by the Catholic Church in Asia must be one that responds to the real thirst of the people of Asia. That is to say, it must make clear, in a way the people can understand, the content of the salvation which Jesus brings. ...

Missiology

In the *Lineamenta*, without attempting to explain what the term can or should mean, the word "Proclamation" is stressed and used over and over again. Considering the Asian context, not

enough attention is given to the necessity of “Dialogue”. ... We need a vision of evangelisation that gives joy and a sense of purpose to a Christian living as one of a minority in the midst of many traditional religions. An evaluation based not on the number of baptisms but rather from the point of view of “How faithful have we been to our mission of evangelisation?” is necessary.

Other Points

... In the *Lineamenta* there is a lack of understanding of Asian culture, especially the Asian culture of today, which is a mixture of traditional Asian culture and an Americanised modern culture. ...

II. PROPOSAL OF TOPICS FOR THE CHURCH OF ASIA

Based upon the theme of the Synod “Jesus Christ the Saviour and His Mission of Love and Service in Asia: ‘That They May Have Life, and Have it Abundantly’” we propose the following eight topics.

(1) An Asian Theology: to develop a missiology, pastoral practice, and spirituality that is based not on a Christ whom we only grasp in our minds, but who speaks to us in our hearts through his living presence and activity. The flowering of the Gospel within a culture (inculturation).

- a) A Christology seen from the cultural ambient of Asia: How to present Jesus in Asia. In what sense is Christ “The Way” and “The Life” for the people of Asia?
- b) Liberation from a Western-style Church and the creation of a new vision: What does the salvation brought by Jesus Christ mean in the concrete? How to express the message of universal salvation so that it can be understood by the people of Asia.

(2) Taking a new look at evangelisation and nourishing the faith to foster an Asian faith.

- a) Sharing experiences in evangelisation and faith, and learning from one another: rather than theological explanations, theories, and articles of faith, emphasis is given to meeting God and the overall spiritual journey in mind and heart. Also, an exchange concerning the limits felt to the “Western-type” of missionary activity used up to now.
- b) To study a concrete plan for the formation of priests and the faithful, and of sharing responsibility with the faithful.
- c) To look for and set up a faith-education programme for youth that corresponds to their new culture.
- d) The formation of migrant Christians as evangelisers.
- e) To determine the positive role of women in evangelisation.

(3) Taking a new look at celebrations and liturgy in Asia. (Are we making use of the good points in each culture?).

(4) To provide light for the various problems of Asia. (Making use of the documents of the FABC).

- a) Poverty and the various problems of modernisation: especially, the breakdown of the family, prostitution, the population explosion and the education of youth, the low status of women, discrimination, the destruction of the environment, etc.
- b) Political corruption and dishonesty, bribery, oppression.

- c) Secularisation accompanying modernisation and urbanisation, a materialistic and hedonistic atmosphere, and a decline in morality.
- d) The contradictions of daily living in a capitalistic and technologically oriented society.
- e) The influence of the media.
- f) The problems of religious fundamentalism, cultural colonialism (the loss of traditional culture), etc.
- g) Maintaining communion with the Church in China (taking into account the situation after the return of Hong Kong and Macao to the rule of Mainland China).

(5) Renewing our solidarity with the poor. Addressing the problem of poverty with all our strength and working with love and service.

- a) Material and social poverty brought about by social injustice.
- b) Spiritual and moral poverty brought about by the inflation of egoism to support and advance ideological materialism and consumerism.

(6) How to continually form a scale of values based on the Christian view of the person and thus incarnate “His mission of love and service”. (How to make the concrete love of Christ grow in people’s hearts): In union with the UN and other NGOs, to form public sentiment toward respect for human life, respect for human rights, social justice, peace, freedom, solidarity, etc.

(7) Asian spirituality and inculturation of the Gospel.

- a) By evangelisation, how can we bring to blossom the spirituality long-valued in East Asia, which seeks by discipline to open one’s heart, spirit, and life to the absolute?
- b) How can the originality of Christianity be brought into dialogue and harmony with other religions?
- c) How can the spirit of Christianity become part of “the culture of youth” in Asia?

(8) Dialogue with other religions.

- a) To try many concrete and varied approaches to dialogue.
- b) To strive to exist and live together with people of other religions.
- c) To establish a richer identity of the Church.

A Special Proposal to the Holy See

To take a new look at the connection between the Churches in Asia and the Holy See. That is, to consider a system of establishing relationships not based on “centralisation” but on “collegiality”. We ask the Holy See to give more recognition to the rightful autonomy of the Local Churches.

For example, it is strange that approval should have to be obtained from the Holy See even for Japanese translations of liturgical and catechetical texts already approved by the Bishops’ Conference. To contribute to the evangelisation of the region, to encourage inculturation, to build up real “collegiality” among the Churches in Asia, trust should be shown to the Local Churches and the independence of the Local Churches should be respected in matters concerning administration, etc.

The Asian Synod — What is at Stake?

Chrys Mc Vey, OP

Why is an Asian Synod so important for the world Church? The Asian experience of pluriformity and tolerance has much to offer a world seeking certainties and prey to the temptation of absolutisation. The synod delegates will have much to discuss, much to learn from each other, and much to teach that could be of great service to the whole Church. The author is chief editor of Focus and Regent of Studies for the Dominicans.

Every once in a while one uncovers sudden reminders of ‘what might have been.’ This happened to me recently when I came across Pope John XXIII’s words in summoning Vatican II. ‘The Catholic Church,’ he wrote, ‘leaves many questions open to the discussion of theologians. She does this to the extent that matters are not absolutely certain. Far from jeopardising the Church’s unity, controversies, as... (Cardinal) Newman has remarked, can actually pave the way for its attainment. For discussion can lead to fuller and deeper

But the many different responses to the Lincamenta, and articles and commentary on the synod indicate that there is a huge gap to be bridged. And this will take more than dialogue between the ‘centre’ and the Asian periphery. Dialogue will be fruitless unless there is genuine metanoia, ‘a turning of the heart’, and more tangible signs of trusting the Asian experience by a listening and learning attitude.

understanding of religious truths; when one idea strikes against another, there may be a spark. But that common saying, expressed in various ways, and attributed to various authors, must be recalled with approval: In essentials, unity; in doubtful matters, liberty; in all things, charity. (Ad Petri Cathedram. No 71, 29 June 1959)

There is certain poignancy in recalling these words and in remembering the euphoria of the 60s and the world’s astonishing response to Pope John’s openness. It is poignant and sad because that tolerant and hopeful vision of the 60s has become so clouded in the 90s and so threatened. It is threatened by a world becoming more violent every day and a world that has gotten used to violence. The violence, eg, of the global market where everything and everybody can be bought and sold affects everyone. In the 80s in countries of the North greed became patriotic and the resulting poverty of the South inevitable and institutionalized. This institutionalized violence has spawned many local varieties. In Pakistan almost every page of the daily paper is a ‘crime page,’ and few families have remained untouched. Every city and town in the country has experienced ethnic and sectarian violence. The reasons for it are many but it is often characterized and fueled by that ‘organised anger’ we label ‘fundamentalism.’ And by fear.

But fear and anger are not alien to today’s Church either. From the centre, fears that those ‘sparks from ideas’ might ignite uncontrollable fires have led to the ‘official’ Church closing itself off from ‘fuller and deeper understanding,’ especially to the great religions of Asia. (For example, the published remarks two years ago by the pope about Buddhism being ‘atheistic,’ and Cardinal Ratzinger in a recent interview discribing Buddhism as ‘autoerotic.) There have been sustained attacks on Indian theologians, by name, and the injudicious and to many, scandalous excommunication of Sri Lankan Orissa Balasuriya Discussion has been closed on such a vital topic for the future of the Church as the ordination of women, and adherence to statements of the magisterium Is demanded even when these are not proposed as infallible teaching. When attempts are made to broaden debate even in response, eg, to the pope’s invitation in Ut Unum S`nt to

discuss the role of the papacy those who do so, like Archbishop Quinn of the US (on the papacy) or the late Cardinal Bernardin (on a common ground for a polarised church), are pilloried by the right. (It seems that the invitation ‘to critique and then help to improve the exercise of papal ministry was intended only for non Catholic Christians and not for those within the fold. Cf Richard P McBrien’s review of *His Holiness* by Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi (NY: Doubleday, 1996) in *Commonweal*, 17 January 1997.) Anger and fear within the Church have led to bitter and acrimonious antagonism.

Hopes and Fears for the Asian Synod

And now we are to have an Asian Synod in Rome. In this issue of *Focus* there are some reactions to the Lineamenta ‘outline,’ and the reflection questions sent by the preparatory commission for the synod. These responses are very critical of many aspects. Individual reservations and fears have been echoed by many episcopal conferences in Asia, the latest being the official response of the Japanese Church to the Lineamenta. (Cf *Asia Focus*, 8 August 97, pp 7-8.)

What is most interesting about this Japanese response is the process. The bishops received the Japanese translation of the Lineamenta and the questions and had first asked their priests for an answer to the questions. The reaction from them was that ‘it was not possible to answer those questions. . . . From the way the questions are proposed, one feels that the holding of the Synod is like an occasion for the central office to evaluate the performance of the branch offices. That kind of Synod would not be worthwhile for the Church in Asia Judgment should not be made from a European framework, but must be seen on the spiritual level of the people who live in Asia The bishops’ conference then prepared their own questions for the Japanese Church.

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The second step in the process was to circulate these questions among major seminaries theology faculties, religious congregations, individual priests and religious, and councils of the laity. They then composed the official response from the 325 replies submitted to them. The response makes some very important points about methodology, about preparing the ‘working document’ for the synod, and some special proposals for the synod in the light of Asian experience.

The response criticises holding such an assembly ‘according to the same time schedule and methodology as those of Europe and America.’ This, they say, is ‘advised,’ since, eg, there is not one country in Asia which has a native language ‘ordinarily used by the Holy See.’ The response asks for ‘a new paradigm to include the varying realities and cultures of Asia,’ and suggests that the global direction of the synod ‘should not be made by the Roman Secretariat, but should be left to the bishops from Asia’.

What many have already commented on is taken up in the Japanese response: Why was so little use made of the work of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference (FABC) over the past 25 years in the preparation of the Lineamenta? They propose greater use be made of the fruit of that work. The response also recommends synod groupings not according to language but according to themes or religious cultures, and focusing on the relationship of Christianity with each religion and culture rather than talking about Christianity and the problems of Asia.

The response offers suggestions for the composition of the ‘working document’ of the synod. Rather than a certain ‘defensiveness’ in the Lineamenta (which ‘makes the expressions presenting

other theological positions clearly unfair and inadequate'), what is needed is an 'open and spiritual Christology rooted in real life...' The response laments that central issues like 'service' and 'dialogue,' as developed by FABC, are not sufficiently stressed. 'Not enough attention is given to the necessity of dialogue,' and in the Lineamenta 'there is a lack of understanding of Asian culture.'

Some of the tasks for the synod, as outlined in the response are: 1. To develop an Asian theology and practice 'that is based not on a Christ whom we only grasp in our minds, but who speaks to us in our hearts through his living presence and activity.' 2 To foster an Asian faith by 'learning from one another,' especially concerning 'the limits of western type missionary activity. 3. To 'take a new look at celebrations and liturgy' from an Asian critique. 4. To 'provide light for the various problems of Asia' (and make use of the FABC documents); some of these problems are listed as poverty, modernisation, the status of women, their exploitation, sex tourism, corruption and oppression, the contradictions of daily living, the problems of religious fundamentalism and cultural colonialism through the media.

Other tasks, as outlined by the Japanese response, have to do with forming values based on the Christian view of the person; linking with other organizations for human rights, peace, solidarity, etc; and Asian spirituality and inculturation, with special attention given to youth and to dialogue with other religions. The response ends with a special proposal to the Holy See' to 'consider a system of establishing relationships not based on "centralisation" but on "collegiality," and asks for 'more recognition to the rightful autonomy of the local churches.'

What is at Stake

The response of the Japanese Church brings to light what is at issue in this forthcoming synod. (Cf the excellent commentary by Brother JP Pinto, 'The Synod for Asia must listen to the cry of our people,' in *Asia Focus*, 25 July 1997, p 7.) The synod is an occasion for the whole Church to reflect on the life of Jesus and its impact on Asia. It is an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between Asian Christians and believers of other faiths. It is, above all, a time to listen to how Asian Christianity can contribute to a deeper understanding of Jesus and his mission.

A Synod is a time to listen. The American bishop, Kenneth Untener, in an article last year entitled, 'How Bishops Talk,' ends with one important question: 'Do we (bishops) view our magisterial role with gnostic overtones, as though we have a source of knowledge that others do not have? Does not the Church, until the eschaton, always need to know more than it knows? (America, 19 October 1996.) The answer is obvious: of course the Church needs to know more than it knows. But there are signs that those at the centre might not be in agreement Roman documents over the years seem to speak as though possessing 'a source of knowledge others do not have,' while professing just the opposite. There are many beautiful things in these documents, things that need saying, but it is Rome who is doing the talking and Rome who sets the agenda. And Asia seems to be a particular concern or target, and there are signs that Rome has been lining up the cannons and stockpiling ammunition.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith some years ago warned against forms of Eastern Meditation, and Cardinal Ratzinger, the president of the congregation, addressed a group of bishops last year on 'Relativism: the Central Problem for Faith Today,' (Origins, 31 October 1996.) in which he accuses relativism of masking as tolerance. In the cardinal's view Catholics are too ready to presuppose, when they enter upon interreligious dialogue, that other religions deserve equal respect and that Christian faith is not necessarily superior to the faith articulated in other traditions. This 'dangerous relativism,' he believes, has replaced a Marxist influenced liberation theology as the number one threat to the faith today. (Cf Francis X Clooney, *Relativism in Perspective, Rereading Ratzinger,* Commonweal, 31 January 1997.

Then the International Theological Commission, an advisory body to the Vatican, whose president is Cardinal Ratzinger, published last January a document on 'Christianity and the World Religions.'⁹ The paper provides 'a sketch of a theology of religions. (Origins, 14 August 1997.) For interreligious dialogue to be fruitful, 'Christianity, and specifically the Catholic Church, must try to clarify how religions are to be evaluated theologically.' The purpose of the paper is to offer some theological principles for doing this. This may be a guideline for Catholics to 'evaluate' other religions by the Church's own standards but it is difficult to see how it will help interreligious dialogue. The commission says, eg, 'One must rule out the existence of different economies of salvation for those who believe in Jesus and those who do not believe in him. There can be no roads leading to God that do not converge in the only road which is Christ.' This is a more complex way of saying there is only one way of salvation and that is Jesus. How does one square this with the 'Christian minority plurality of religions' Asian experience? Such an absolutising attitude, opting for certainty over mystery, is utterly disruptive of dialogue.

The synod in an occasion for the whole Church to reflect on the life of Jesus and its impact on Asia. It is an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between Asian Christians and believers of other faiths. It is, above all, a time to listen to how Asian Christianity can contribute to a deeper understanding of Jesus and his mission.

The document also distinguishes between the Spirit's universal presence and the Spirit's 'special presence in the Church... the privileged place for the action of the Spirit.' Yet the authors state they hope to exclude a false claim of superiority: 'The truth as truth is always Superior; but the truth of Jesus Christ, as made clear by our need for him, is always service.' Yes, but that 'superior' truth emerges from experience. What is at issue and what is of paramount importance is the attention one gives to experience. It is the world of experience and not the world of the Church that is 'the privileged place for the action of the Spirit.(That most extraordinary human being, Simone Weil, believed that, 'Every time a (person) has, with a pure heart, called upon Osiris, Dionysus, Krishna, Buddha, the Tao, etc. the Son of God has answered... by sending the Holy Spirit.' Quoted in review of Simone Weil (London: Fount, 1996) in Expository Times, April 1997, Vol 168, No 7.) Will this Asian experience and what the Spirit is saying in Asia, be heard and honoured at the Asian Synod in Rome? Pope John Paul II is committed to the cause of Christian unity, and knows the efficacy of honest dialogue' - efficacy that can transcend all human expectations. Indeed, he witnesses to this in his 1995 encyclical on ecumenism: 'Although the concept of dialogue might appear to give priority to the cognitive dimension (allalogos), all dialogue implies a global, existential dimension.'"(Ut Unum Sint, No 28.) To speak like this is to believe that entering into dialogue is to go beyond concepts and propositions; it is to enter a higher level of reality. Humble conversation becomes, in the pope's words, 'an indispensable step along the path toward human self-realisation, the self-realisation both of each individual and of every human community,' No community 'can fulfill its destiny and mission without dialogue external and internal.

I would not be the first to note the schizoid element in official statements from Rome some have even called the curia mentality pathological. Pope John Paul speaks of dialogue as indispensable and during the Solidarity years described loyalty oaths that go against one's 'conscience and convictions' as 'the most painful blow inflicted to human dignity.' And then we have the Balasuriya case: no dialogue, no due process, the presentation of a loyalty oath to be signed. This, in conscience, Balasuriya could not do, and so was excommunicated. There is a discrepancy between the pope's strong, prophetic words of protest against communist authoritarianism and state sponsored censorship, on the one hand, and his implicit acceptance of similar methods in dealing with theological dissent and disciplinary deviation within the Church's own ranks. (Cf. Mc Brien, op.cit.)

Asia's New Wine

What this means for an Asian Synod is hard to predict. But the many different responses to the Lincamenta, and articles and commentary on the synod indicate that there is a huge gap to be bridged. And this will take more than dialogue between the 'centre' and the Asian periphery. Dialogue will be fruitless unless there is genuine metanoia, 'a turning of the heart,' and more tangible signs of trustings the Asian experience by a listening and learning attitude.

It is the role of the magisterium to teach, surely, but every good teacher is first of all a curious and attentive listener. Teachers are constantly updating themselves, learning new methods, accommodating themselves to new syllabi. Asia to whom the 21st century belongs is writing this new syllabus. Unless this is reflected in the process of the synod and in the final document, then the fears of many in Asia will be realised. 'Nobody,' Jesus said, 'puts new wine in old wineskin; otherwise the new wine (still fermenting) will burst the skins and they will be ruined. New wine must be put into new wineskins. But nobody who has been drinking old wine wants new. "The old is good," he says' (Lk 5.37

39). What Jesus preaches is the unexpected. Who will lend an ear to such a bewildering God? The message what the Spirit at work in Asia is saying to the Church is like new wine still fermenting and not sufficiently aged. It is too new, disagreeable to the palate, and some will say, 'The old is good,' and return to the routine and to old wineskins. This would be retreat from the future and the present.

For the Asian Synod to succeed, trust and patience are both required. Not only trust in the Asian experience, but trust in the Spirit at work in the world. And the centre must surrender control of events, and be patient in awaiting an outcome it cannot predict. 'The kingdom of God is like a man scattering seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how he does not know. All by itself the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear' (Mk 4. 26

28). Perhaps the best advice to the centre is: Don't worry. Trust in God not vigilance committees and go to sleep. God will do what God does best: surprise us all.

Ref.: *FOCUS*, Vol. 16, Nr. 4, 1996, p. 139ss.

Marc l'évangéliste *- Itinéraire d'un jeune missionnaire -*

Michel Dujarier

Parmi les missionnaires dont le Nouveau Testament nous présente une image vivante, Paul est le plus célèbre. Sa conversion et son dynamisme apostolique ont fait de lui le modèle de l'apôtre, courageux et persévérant jusqu'au don de sa vie.

Mais il n'est pas le seul dont la tradition nous a gardé le souvenir. Nous connaissons beaucoup de ses compagnons qui, eux aussi, sont pour nous un exemple de zèle évangélique et missionnaire (Voir Alice Dermience, «Les collaborateurs apostoliques de Paul», Mission de l'Église n° 112, juillet 1996, pp. 12 à 18).

Jean, surnommé Marc

L'un d'entre eux présente à nos yeux un intérêt tout particulier: c'est un jeune homme du nom de Jean, surnommé Marc (Ac 12, 12). Il habitait à Jérusalem. Sa mère s'appelait Marie et son oncle Barnabas.

La première fois que nous entendons parler de lui, c'est au moment où, vers 43 ou 44, le roi Hérode Agrippa I commence à persécuter l'Église:

«A cette époque-là, le roi Hérode entreprit de mettre à mal certains membres de l'Église. Il supprima par le glaive Jacques, le frère de Jean. Et, quand il eut constaté la satisfaction des Juifs, il fit procéder à une nouvelle arrestation: celle de Pierre» (Ac 12, 23).

Pierre n'est pas au bout de sa mission. Le Seigneur le libère miraculeusement de la prison où il avait été enfermé. Aussitôt, l'apôtre cherche à rejoindre ses frères et soeurs chrétiens:

«Pierre se repéra et gagna la maison de Marie, la mère de Jean surnommé Marc; il y avait là une assez nombreuse assistance en prière» (Ac 12, 12).

Le jeune Marc appartenait donc à une famille devenue chrétienne. Lui même avait peut-être eu l'occasion de rencontrer Jésus durant sa vie publique. Il l'avait même suivi comme un disciple fidèle puisqu'il était probablement avec lui au jardin des Oliviers lors de son arrestation, le soir du jeudi saint. C'est, en effet, ce que suggère une tradition qui voit en lui le personnage anonyme mentionné par l'évangéliste (Marc est le seul évangéliste à raconter cet incident; l'apparence autobiographique de ce détail a depuis longtemps suggéré qu'il pourrait s'agir de l'évangéliste lui-même (TOB note c). Certains en doutent, car, selon le témoignage de Papias (II siècle), Marc «n'avait pas entendu ni accompagné le Seigneur» (voir ci-dessous p. 4, note 4). Pourtant, le Canon de Muratori estime que Marc a dû connaître Jésus):

«Tous abandonnèrent Jésus et prirent la fuite. Un jeune homme le suivait, n'ayant qu'un drap sur le corps. On l'appréhende, mais lui, lâchant le drap, s'enfuit tout nu» (Mc 14, 50-52).

Certes convaincu, mais pas téméraire, le jeune disciple évita ainsi d'être arrêté. Il reconnaît lui-même sa faiblesse. Il est probable que, plus tard, il ait longuement réfléchi sur cet épisode avec Pierre — faible lui aussi — dont il fut le compagnon.

Un jeune missionnaire découragé

Cette dérobade de jeunesse n'empêcha pas Marc de devenir un chrétien soucieux de bien faire. Désireux de témoigner du Christ, il n'hésita pas à se proposer pour partir en mission au loin. C'est à Antioche de Syrie qu'il alla d'abord travailler.

Son oncle Barnabas était dans cette ville depuis plus d'un an. Aidé de plusieurs disciples, il y prêchait la Bonne Nouvelle et animait la communauté chrétienne qui se développait. Un jour, celle-ci le délégua, avec Saul, pour apporter aux frères de Judée le fruit d'une collecte (Ac 11, 29-30).

Quand ils repartirent, Marc profita de l'occasion pour aller avec eux à Antioche (Ac 12, 25). Il n'est pas nommé parmi les prophètes et les catéchistes de cette ville (Ac 13, 1); mais sans doute avait-il manifesté son désir de participer à l'évangélisation. Il partit donc en mission avec Barnabas et Saul à titre d'auxiliaire (Ac 13, 5).

Voilà nos deux missionnaires qui s'embarquent pour Chypre avec leur jeune assistant. Après avoir traversé toute l'île en y annonçant l'Évangile, ils reprennent la mer pour atteindre la province de Pamphylie, à Pergé.

Les premiers mois de ce voyage ont dû être assez durs physiquement et moralement. La vie de prédicateur ambulant est difficile. Jean-Marc trouve cette tâche trop risquée; il décide de rentrer chez lui:

«C'est alors que Jean se sépara d'eux pour retourner à Jérusalem. Quant à eux, ils poursuivirent leur route et arrivèrent à Antioche de Pisidie» (Ac 13, 13-14).

Prêt pour un nouveau départ

Lorsque Barnabas et Paul eurent évangélisé Antioche de Pisidie, Iconium, Lystre et Derbé, ils revinrent à Antioche de Syrie:

«A leur arrivée, ils rassemblèrent l'Église et racontèrent tout ce que Dieu avait réalisé avec eux et surtout comment il avait ouvert aux païens la porte de la foi» (Ac 14, 27).

Vers l'an 50, nos missionnaires envisagèrent d'entreprendre un deuxième voyage missionnaire. Entre temps, Jean-Marc s'était ressaisi. Mûri, il se propose de nouveau pour partir avec eux; mais Paul s'y opposa:

«Barnabas voulait emmener aussi avec eux Jean, appelé Marc. Mais Paul n'était pas d'avis de reprendre comme compagnon un homme qui les avait quittés en Pamphylie et n'avait donc pas partagé leur travail. Leur désaccord s'aggrava tellement qu'ils partirent chacun de leur côté. Barnabas prit Marc avec lui et s'embarqua pour Chypre, tandis que Paul s'adjoignait Silas et s'en allait, remis par les frères à la grâce du Seigneur» (Ac 15, 37-40).

Marc partit donc avec son oncle pour l'île de Chypre, afin d'y «visiter les frères», voir où ils en étaient et affermir les communautés (cf. Ac 15, 36.41). Nous ne savons malheureusement pas jusqu'où cette tournée les conduisit.

Cette divergence de point de vue ne concernait pas le contenu du Message. Les deux équipes ont travaillé en deux régions différentes, mais dans la même perspective. Il n'y eut pas d'opposition fondamentale entre elles.

La preuve en est que, quelques années plus tard, nous retrouvons Marc aux côtés de Paul. (Nous ne prenons pas ici position sur l'authenticité paulinienne des épîtres pastorales). Dans sa lettre à Philémon, en effet, l'apôtre transmet le salut de Marc, son «collaborateur» qui se trouve avec lui à ce moment-là. Pareillement, l'épître aux Colossiens envoie «les salutations de Marc, le cousin de Barnabas» (Col 4, 10); et dans la deuxième lettre à Timothée, Marc est qualifié de «précieux pour le ministère» (2 Tim 4,11).

Compagnon de Pierre

Marc était devenu peu à peu un missionnaire convaincu et expérimenté, estimé de tous. Pierre le prit alors comme compagnon pour évangéliser la région de Rome. Il l'aimait tellement qu'il le considérait comme son enfant: «Marc, mon fils» (1 P 5, 13).

Ils ont certainement été très proches l'un de l'autre. Papias, évêque de Hiérapolis en Asie Mineure durant la première moitié du deuxième siècle, affirme qu'ils ont travaillé ensemble et que l'évangile rédigé par Marc reflète l'enseignement de Pierre:

«Marc, qui était l'interprète de Pierre, a écrit avec exactitude — mais pourtant sans ordre — tout ce dont il se souvenait de ce qui avait été dit ou fait par le Seigneur; mais, plus tard, il a accompagné Pierre. Celui-ci donnait ses enseignements selon les besoins, mais sans faire une synthèse des paroles du Seigneur. De la sorte, Marc n'a pas commis d'erreur en écrivant comme il se souvenait. Il n'a eu en effet qu'un seul dessein, celui de ne rien laisser de côté de ce qu'il avait entendu et de ne tromper en rien dans ce qu'il rapportait» (Fragment de «L'explication des paroles du Seigneur» de Papias, rapporté par Eusèbe de Césarée, H.E. III, 39, 15).

L'évangile écrit par Marc reflète donc l'enseignement de Pierre sur les actions et les paroles du Christ. A la fin du deuxième siècle, Irénée de Lyon nous le confirme quand il écrit:

«Après la mort de Pierre et de Paul, (ils furent martyrisés à Rome entre 62 et 67), Marc, le disciple et l'interprète de Pierre, nous transmet lui aussi par écrit ce que prêchait Pierre» (Irénée: «Contre les hérésies», III, 1, 1. En III, 10, 6, il parle encore de «Marc, interprète et compagnon de Pierre». Voir aussi Clément d'Alexandrie cité par Eusèbe de Césarée en H.E. VI, 14, 6 et les renseignements donnés par Eusèbe en H.E. II, 15, 12, ainsi que Clément dans GCS III, 206).

Missionnaire jusqu'au sang

Peut-on suivre Marc jusqu'au terme de sa vie? Sur ce point, hélas, il nous manque des documents d'époque, mais une tradition fondée existe qui nous a été transmise par Eusèbe de Césarée:

«On dit que ce Marc (= l'évangéliste) fut le premier à être envoyé en Égypte. Il y prêcha l'Évangile qu'il avait composé et il établit des Églises d'abord à Alexandrie même» (Eusèbe de Césarée, H.E. II, 16, 1).

Le succès même de son apostolat déclencha la persécution contre lui. Arrêté et attaché à la queue d'un cheval, Marc aurait été traîné ainsi sur la plage jusqu'à ce que mort s'en suive. L'Église d'Alexandrie et tous les chrétiens d'Égypte vénèrent fidèlement ce martyr comme étant leur père dans la foi. Aujourd'hui encore, nombreux sont les pèlerins qui viennent le prier dans la crypte où reposent ses restes. (Au IXe siècle, les Vénitiens prirent les reliques du martyr pour les placer à «Saint Marc» de Venise. Depuis 1968, elles ont été rendues à l'Église d'Alexandrie).

Dans sa simplicité et jusque dans sa faiblesse, le témoignage de Marc est riche. Il nous

touche profondément. En ce jeune chrétien, nous nous retrouvons tous.

Nous nous disons disciples du Christ, mais notre peur ou notre égoïsme nous amène parfois à fuir la croix qui se présente sur notre route. La période de l'adolescence est celle des expériences d'autonomie juvénile souvent douloureuses.

Heureusement, soutenus par la foi persévérante de nos aînés, nous reprenons goût à la vie selon l'Évangile. Aux infidélités de jeunesse succède peu à peu une maturité d'adulte. Notre amitié pour le Christ devient mieux fondée et plus stable.

C'est alors que l'Esprit suscite en nous les premiers désirs d'engagement. «A cause du Christ et de l'Évangile», nous sommes prêts à prendre la route, à nous mettre au service des autres. Nous nous sentons responsables et nous assumons avec joie une mission, chez nous ou dans le tiers-monde.

Ce n'est pas toujours facile. C'est une probation, une épreuve. Il peut y avoir des moments durs, des échecs ou même des retours. Mais, de toute façon, l'engagement nous mûrit. Et alors, en adultes, nous entrons courageusement dans la vie, heureux de nous donner au Christ, à l'Église, à nos frères et soeurs d'ici et de partout.

Ainsi, peu à peu, notre vie se bâtit et s'enrichit grâce à tous ces engagements successifs qui, d'étape en étape, nous façonnent et nous mûrissent. Comme Jean-Marc, nous sommes d'abord «auxiliaires», puis «compagnons de travail» et même «précieux pour le ministère». Et nous trouvons la joie des «bons et fidèles serviteurs» (Mt 25, 21).

C'est le don total, le don de nous-mêmes renouvelé chaque jour, jusqu'au soir de notre vie. Ce peut-être aussi le don jusqu'au sang, si le Seigneur nous y appelle un jour. Mais peu importe la forme; ce qui compte, c'est de se donner et de se donner par amour.

Avec Marc, et avec Paul son maître dans l'apostolat missionnaire, efforçons nous de redire au Seigneur:

«Je n'attache vraiment aucun prix à ma propre vie. Mon but, c'est de mener à bien ma course et le service que le Seigneur Jésus m'a confié: rendre témoignage à l'Évangile de la grâce de Dieu» (Act 20, 24).

Ref.: *Mission de l'Église*, No. 115, Avril 1997.

TANZANIA – Street Children in Mwanza

Sister Teresa Mgangira, MSOLA

I arrived in Mwanza on 5 January 1995 and I started going around the town just to observe and to listen to street children and watch their activities...

Some children are living on the street; they usually keep family ties and go home at night while the others are children of the street who sleep and eat on the streets, because they have no more contact with their families. They often get involved in antisocial activities, most of them look dirty and so do their clothes. I am mainly involved with children of the street.

To build up a relationship with them I had to be with them, listening, respecting them and showing them love and affection as much as I can. When I found them playing cards, I joined them, if I found them eating, I sat with them and joined their conversation, making sure that they did most of the talking. I sat down with the bigger boys while they were smoking 'bhang' (marijuana) or drinking 'gongo' (alcohol). A number of times I have seen boys and girls fighting, especially when they were drunk. I have been in bars at night and found some of the young girls (14 or 15 years old) who were expecting babies, still getting drunk in bars.

Never, at any of these times did I preach to them or even tell them to stop taking drugs. As they saw that I did not preach, they started asking what I thought about taking drugs and so on. Then I gave them my views. The secret is never to decide for the young people. The decision has to come from them. I can only challenge them and with their help try to find ways to spend their time differently, rather than in smoking, taking strong drink or gambling. Most of the little ones love playing cards and this gives me a chance to interview them, as children feel at ease to talk about themselves or their families while in a group doing something.

Sometimes the boys come to our house for different activities, e.g. knotting, card making, watching slide shows or videos, when I can borrow a machine. Then they can have some recreation. Besides enjoying the films, with my help, they draw simple lessons from them, in particular from the Bible stories. It also teaches them the discipline of sitting still and listening.

They are always happy to have a roof over their heads. Some of them go to sleep, because for once they can lie down without being harassed by the police or the 'Sungu Sungu' (traditional defence groups).

Building up a relationship with the street girls is not that easy. With the help of some street boys I managed to get in contact with them, when I started spending a night on the streets, once a month. I also found some older girls at a guest house. So far they show little interest in any kind of handwork. They want a quick way of getting money, which is sex with men. But I must say some of the younger girls are forced to do this by the older ones.

Once in a while the girls come home to visit me, but more often I go to visit them. They are very open in sharing about their lives. I try to show them love, understanding and concern.

As the children learn to trust me (some of them call me 'Mama') they tell me their story. Most of the children of the street are from poor families or from broken homes or they are orphans often maltreated by step-parents. They ran away from home and are trying to make a living from the street. They are at a very crucial time of their development, when they are learning to socialise and need love, concern, attention and interaction with adults.

Responding to their needs is emotionally and physically demanding and I feel it is very important to distance myself from the work at least once a month by going some where else for a day.

I take time to visit those who are sick, sometimes taking them to hospital. It is very sad to see them lying outside a shop or under a tree with nothing to cover themselves. No matter how sick they are, they lie down on the ground or on a cement floor outside the Post Office, as they have no shelter. I

feel helpless, not knowing what to do except to be with them.

Spending the night on the street has also given me the chance to be in contact with the girls and to witness harassment and physical abuse from the police and the 'Sungu-Sungu'. This is the main problem that the children and even the older street people are facing. Each day they have to think of where they will spend the night, where to get food and how to avoid being beaten.

Although a great number of people seem not to be concerned about these children, I am happy to see a group of lay people from a parish of Mwanza who, through their Parish Priest, have offered to help some of the bigger boys.

Petit Echo, 1996/90, n. 875



COMING EVENTS

SEDOS AFTERNOON SEMINAR

“JUBILEE 2000 CAMPAIGN”

Ann Pettifor, London (Director of Jubilee 2000)

Fr Mike Seigel, SVD (Sedos Debt Working)

Sr Monique Fabre, RSCJ (Sedos Debt Works Group)

Tuesday, *17 February*, 15:00 - 18:30 hrs.
Brothers of the Christian Schools, Via Aurelia, 476.
(simultaneous translation)

WORKING GROUPS

Thursday, 22 January	Food, Land and Hunger	15:30 hrs at SEDOS
Friday, 6 February	World Debt	15:30 hrs at SEDOS
Wednesday, 11 March	China	15:30 hrs at SEDOS
