

Vol. 31, No. 1
January

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Editorial

In our first issue of the 1999 Bulletin we are able to offer you the conferences held at our Annual General Assembly of SEDOS last December here in Rome. The theme in consideration was: Advocacy work as Evangelisation. —

Brother IGNACIO HARDING, OFM, the director of Franciscans International in New York, told us of his four years' experience in the ministry of advocacy at the United Nations. Although limitations are evident, the possibilities for a religious presence are many. He invited the congregations to consider it as a growing priority in order to extend the possibilities. —

Sr BRIGID REYNOLDS, SM, and Fr SEÁN HEALY, SMA, presented Ireland as a case study of their ministry of advocacy. They were able to share with us many clear successes of their rich experience of advocacy in Ireland. —

The FORUM of SEOUL, a gathering with representatives from different local Churches of Asia, met in August of last year to reflect on the difficult economic situation confronting Asia. They present a critical analysis of the economic downturn and ask the Churches for concerted actions of solidarity for those most hit by the crisis. —

Fr PETER HENRIOT, SJ, a missionary in Zambia and a specialist in economic issues, was invited to give a conference organised by TROCAIRE in Ireland. He questions the ethics behind the Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed on Africa and concludes with some possible alternatives. —

We conclude the issue with a MISSIONARY MOMENT, giving space to the suffering of some of the Protestant Churches in China.

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Brother Ignacio Harding, OFM, Co-Director

Franciscans International — International Advocacy as Integral Evangelization: Possibilities and Limitations

Rome, 1 December 1998

Sisters and Brothers, Peace and all good! Thank you for this opportunity to share with you our on-going and relatively new experience as a ministry of the Worldwide Franciscan Family at and through the United Nations Organization, as well as its subsidiary bodies.

For organizational purposes I intend to present this brief report in six parts:

1. General Introduction.
2. United Nations Overview.
3. Franciscans International.
4. Possibilities: what are we doing and what can be done.
5. Limitations: what we would like to do better.
6. Closing thoughts and recommendations for friends and members of SEDOS.

1. General Introduction:

You all know very well that in the past three or four decades a wholesome new and refreshing approach to development has emerged on the world scene. In the not too distant past the measurement of development was principally and essentially considered economic. Meaning growth in individual and national material economic income — called Income Per Person on a personal level and Gross National Product on a country level. The more money a person or country had, the more developed it was considered. The fallacy in this method was clearly seen as high income nations also had low literacy rates, poor health services and shockingly low life expectancy.

Thanks to worldwide social, economic, and cultural studies, a significant shift has occurred and the world now is principally concerned with integral human development. Over 17 different aspects of human existence are now considered before a country is given a position on the development ladder.

Today, this coincides greatly, in the same way, with the more integral conception of the Church's definition of Evangelization.

Consider these brief quotes from the great Encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi*:

“Between evangelization and human advancement — development and liberation — there are in fact profound links. These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and of justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of man? We ourselves have taken care to point this out, by recalling that it is impossible to accept ‘that in evangelization one could or should ignore the importance of the problems so much discussed today, concerning justice, liberation, development and peace in the world. This would be to forget the lesson which comes to us from the Gospel concerning love of our neighbour who is suffering and in need’”(n. 31).

“For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: ‘Now I am making the whole of creation new’ [Rv 21:5]. But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism [cf. Rom 6:4] and by lives lived according to the Gospel [cf. Eph 4:23-24; Col 3:9-10]. The purpose of evangelization is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be ex-

pressed in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert [cf. Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18, 2:4], solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs”(n. 18). *“Strata of humanity which are transformed: for the Church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind’s criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation”* (n. 19).

“There is no doubt that the effort to proclaim the Gospel to the people of today, who are buoyed up by hope but at the same time often oppressed by fear and distress, is a service rendered to the Christian community and also to the whole of humanity” “...the Church, ‘striving to proclaim the Gospel to all people’ [Ad gentes, n. 1], has had the single aim of fulfilling her duty of being the messenger of the Good News of Jesus Christ — the Good News proclaimed through two fundamental commands: ‘Put on the new self’ [cf. Eph 4:24, 2:15; Col 3:10; Gal 3:27; Rom 13:14; 2 Cor 5:17] and ‘Be reconciled to God’”[2 Cor 5:20] (nn. 1-2).

“The Church considers it to be undoubtedly important to build up structures which are more human, more just, more respectful of the rights of the person and less oppressive and less enslaving...”(n. 36).

Today the international structures that enslave and dehumanize have a new name: globalization. John Paul II in a meeting on Human Rights in the Vatican just last week reiterated what is becoming one of his new and strong evangelical proposals for an alternative “Globalization of Solidarity”.

So as not to spend too much time “preaching to the choir” let me end this introduction here suggesting that to unite the tenets of true human development and integral evangelization there is a new need for concrete, creative, and sustained international advocacy in favour of the “Globalization of Solidarity” and a good place to do such advocacy is the United Nations and its bodies, the world’s global forum, and as John XXIII called it: “...the last, best hope for peace”.

2. United Nations Overview

Most of us know little or nothing about the United Nations itself except the slanted information received through most media sponsored by huge international interest groups who want no shackles put on them, especially on their international business interests.

Although we all hope that through constructive criticism and evaluation, the UN becomes a better and more effective institution for the world community, we should start by recognizing these positive, relevant and little known facts.

The United Nations is today, more than ever with its 185 member States and two observer missions, engaged in service to all the world’s nations and peoples. However its ability to function is severely hampered by its well known financial problems. Unless Member States pay their debts to the Organization — over \$2.5 billion is owed as of 30 September 1998 — the UN will remain in a precarious financial situation.

The budget for the UN’s core functions — the Secretariat operations in New York, Geneva, Nairobi, Vienna, and five Regional Commissions — is \$1.25 billion a year. This is about 4 per cent of New York City’s annual budget — and nearly a billion dollars less than the yearly cost of Tokyo’s Fire Department. It is \$3.7 billion less than the annual budget of New York’s State University system.

The USA’s share of the UN’s regular budget for 1998 is \$298 million — the equivalent of \$1.11 per American. Tiny San Marino, by comparison, pays \$4.26 per citizen to the UN.

The UN has no army. Governments voluntarily supply troops and other personnel to halt conflicts that threaten peace and security. The United States and other Member States on the Security Council — not the Secretary-General — decide when and where to deploy peacekeeping troops.

The New York World Headquarters of the UN requires the services of less than 4,700 people. The Swedish capital of Stockholm, by contrast, has 60,000 municipal employees.

Some 52,280 people work in the UN system, which includes the Secretariat and 29 other organizations such as United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Three times as many people work for McDonald’s, while Disney World and Disneyland employ 50,000.

Eighty per cent of the work of the UN system is devoted to helping developing countries build the capacity to help themselves. This includes promoting and protecting democracy and human rights; saving children from starvation and disease; providing relief assistance to refugees and disaster victims; countering global crime, drugs and disease; and assisting countries devastated by war and the long-term threat of landmines.

The United Nations and its agencies, funds and programmes — mainly the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), The World Food Program (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) — have \$4.8 billion a year to spend on economic and social development, to assist countries in such areas as health care, sanitation, agriculture and food distribution. This is the equivalent of 81 cents per human being. In 1996, the world's governments spent about \$797 billion in military expenditures — the equivalent of \$135 per human being.

The total cost of all UN peacekeeping operations in 1997 was some \$1.3 billion the equivalent of less than 0.5 per cent of the US military budget, and less than 0.2 per cent of global military spending.

The United States' assessed share of UN peacekeeping expenses — nearly 31 per cent of the yearly total — has dropped by half, from about \$1 billion in 1995 to some \$400 million in 1997. This equals less than one-quarter of 1 per cent of the annual US military budget.

Member States share the risks of maintaining peace and security. Since 1948, over 1,580 UN peacekeepers from some 85 countries have died in the line of duty. Less than 3 per cent were Americans.

Under the supervision of an American, Joseph E. Connor, the Under-Secretary-General for Management, the UN Secretariat has a zero-growth budget of \$2.5 billion for 1998-99 — \$1.25 billion a year. This is down \$100 million from 1994-95, the result of efficiency gains and the elimination of nearly 1,000 jobs.

UN Secretariat staff has been cut by 25 per cent to about 8,700 from a high of more than 12,000 in 1984-85, and streamlining continues. Tough new standards have been set for staff performance. UN staff members have about one-third of their salaries deducted in lieu of taxes.

A "quiet revolution" to make the UN leaner and

more effective was launched by the Secretary-General Kofi Annan in July 1997, as the second phase of his reform efforts. Initiatives include consolidating several Secretariat bodies, streamlining management and shifting resources from administration to development work.

An Office of Internal Oversight, established in 1994, is pursuing its mandate of promoting more effective and efficient management, and eliminating waste, fraud and mismanagement. It includes a special UN Investigative unit and a hotline.

The total operating expenses for the entire UN system — including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and all the UN funds, programmes, and specialized agencies put together — come to some \$18.2 billion a year. This is less than the annual revenue of a major corporation like Dow Chemical, which took in more than \$20 billion in 1997.

The top seven contributors to the UN are the USA (25%); Japan (17.98%); Germany (9.63%); France (6.49%); Italy (5.39%); the United Kingdom (5.07%); and Russia (2.87%). Collectively, they account for more than 72% of the regular UN budget.

The United States — whose citizens hold more UN Secretariat jobs than any other Member State, as well as the top posts at UNICEF, the United Nations Development Program, the World Bank, the World Food Program, the International Court of Justice and the Universal Postal Union — owes more in unpaid assessments, both past and current, than any other Member State: \$1.6 billion.

Of the \$327.5 million in procurements approved by the UN Secretariat in New York in 1997, American companies got 59 per cent of the business, or \$192 million. For every dollar that the USA contributed in 1996 to the New York-based United Nations Development Program, it got back more than \$3 in contracts to US companies and other goods and services.

The UN, its agencies and the diplomatic and consular corps contribute \$3.2 billion a year to the economy of the New York City area alone, according to Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani. That has generated 30,600 jobs, yielding \$1.2 billion in annual earnings.

As you can see the UN is a complicated structure that spans the globe. How does it work? Where can we fit in?

At UN Headquarters in New York there are three basic interrelated structures. *The UN Secretariat and*

UN Specialized Agency Offices (like UNICEF); Permanent Missions of each member State; and the NGO community in consultative status with the UN.

First, the *United Nations Secretariat*, is responsible for the organization and coordination of all the structures and activities that the member States approve. It is the executive body putting into practice all that is decided by the member States. The *UN Specialized Agency Offices* in New York coordinate activities with member States, NGO's, and the Secretariat itself.

Next, *each country has its own UN staff with one or more Ambassador — Permanent Representatives.* It is interesting that since most countries have Embassies to the United States in Washington D.C., the country delegations to the UN, which is on International Territory, are called "Permanent Missions" to the United Nations, each headed by an Ambassador. They together are the political decision making body for UN decisions and activities.

Each member country has one representative and one vote in the General Assembly, which ordinarily meets from September to December and then extraordinarily after the New Year with no time limit to finish any unfinished agenda items. In the last few years this has become normal procedure since, for instance in 1998, the agenda contains no less than 158 items.

The General Assembly has six main Committees (Disarmament, Sustainable Development, Economic and Social Affairs, De-Colonization and Self Determination, Peacekeeping and Finance) which prepare the agenda items and resolutions brought up. There are also many Sub-Commissions and regional groups to treat items for any and all of the Committees.

The Security Council is the 15 member body responsible at all times for world security. Five countries are permanent members with the right to veto any decision: the US, Russian Federation, England, France and China. The other ten countries are elected for a two year membership by regions. This arrangement is in the process of long term evaluation and there are many proposals for its reform being presented for a more representative membership.

Besides the final decisions made by the General Assembly in New York, important preparations are made at the level of the UN Offices in Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi, as well as its 29 Programmes and Agencies centred around the world.

One of the most important structures for NGO participation has been the UN World Conferences and now their follow up Special Sessions of the General Assembly. Rio de Janeiro on Environment 1992, Vienna on Human Rights 1994, Copenhagen on Social Development 1995, Beijing on Women, to name a few.

And finally, the Non-Governmental Organizations community that is organized through the Conference of NGO's (CONGO). Particular NGO's also work together as groups in NGO Committees by interest area or institutional commitment. There are NGO Committees on: Aging; Disarmament; Human Rights; Narcotics and Substance Abuse; Shelter and Community; Southern Africa; Sustainable Development; Trade, Investment and Entrepreneurship; Family; Indigenous Peoples; Youth; Population; Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; Freedom of Religion and Belief; Religious NGO's; Social Development and the Reform of the Security Council.

There are also instances of NGO caucuses, like the Values Caucus, the Faith Based Caucus for an International Criminal Court; and the Coalition for the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

The participation of NGO's today is based on a 1996/31 resolution governing their participation that is currently under study once again with the possibility to open the doors of even wider participation.

At this time an NGO in General Consultative Status, like Franciscans International, an NGO with several areas of concern and members in many different countries, or one with Special Consultative Status — meaning with specialized interests and membership limited to even one country, may intervene verbally and/or in writing and may apply to participate in meetings and Conferences of the UN around the world in their specific areas of expertise and concern.

Let move now more into the concrete to share a little about what we are trying to do.

3. Franciscans International

Franciscans International is a global organization of the Franciscan Family from the grass roots up to and including the General leadership. It includes sisters, brothers, priests, active as well as cloistered; and a large number of women and men who are Secular Franciscans as well as some Friends of Franciscans International, not actually Franciscans, but working with our groups. We are ecumenical since we have

both religious and Secular Franciscan members from among the Anglicans, Lutherans, as well as a group known as Ecumenical Franciscans. We are joined together by a consensus statement of the vision for our ministry at the UN:

Vision Statement of Franciscans International

We are Franciscan men and women who are followers of Saint Francis of Assisi.

We believe that all creation, from the smallest organism to human beings, is in interdependent relationship on planet earth. We are aware that this relationship is threatened by a refusal to admit this interdependence, by exploitation and by domination.

We commit ourselves to encourage awareness of this interdependence so that all creation may live in harmony.

We will do this by service to our own members and to United Nations personnel as well as other non-governmental organizations through collaboration, education and action regarding:

***Care of Creation
Peacemaking
Concern for the Poor***

We see these concerns as congruent with the goals expressed by the United Nations in its Charter and in its Declaration on Human Rights.

We are a service of the Conference of the Franciscan Family, based here in Rome representing the whole Franciscan Family worldwide. Special Statutes now governed by an International Executive Committee of eight members from Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America that in 1999 will be replaced by a more permanent International Board of Directors.

We maintain our main office at the UN Headquarters in New York with a Sister and Brother, Kathleen Uhler and myself, as Co-Directors and UN Permanent Representatives, Sister Mary Theresa Plante, a volunteer UN Representative, an administrative Secretary and an Intern from Saint Francis College in Brooklyn.

We have a joint office with the Dominicans in Geneva, Switzerland, with a permanent part time secretary and a team that attends the important Human Rights Commission and Sub-Commission meetings.

We have Sister Carol Ann Kane, FMM, coordinating the organization of our presence in the most important UN Environmental Program.

We have sent delegations to all of the major World Conferences and on a more limited basis to the follow up sessions on World Conferences.

As in all experiences of Evangelization, we have learned a lot more than perhaps we have been able to contribute.

4. Possibilities

Let me share a few of our concrete experiences so that you can perhaps see some more of the possibilities this ministry may open up to all of you as well.

When I first arrived at the UN in June 1995, one of my first experiences was to be approached by Dr Amelia de Barrish, Ambassador of Costa Rica. She was insisting that as a Franciscan I should help her to promote a General Assembly Resolution for a 10 day worldwide cease fire from all hostilities, in honour of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the UN in October. I remember so well my reaction as I thought that it sounded like such a minimal proposal that I skeptically asked her what would be the significance of a 10 day cease fire? She looked at me incredulously as she explained that if a unanimous Resolution could be passed by July, it would allow the UN to then ship and stockpile food and medicines on boarders of every area of conflict so that when the cease fire took place they could be immediately shipped in to the war torn areas and could save the lives of anywhere from 3 to 10 million people. That certainly changed my perspective. We supported her proposal in NGO meetings, with governments and in our publications and private meetings. She was able to have 80 country co-sponsors of the resolution that when presented passed unanimously. The cease fire went into effect for 10 days in October 1995, as far as we know it was totally adhered to and millions of lives were saved because of it.

In the preparatory meeting in New York for the World Summit on Human Settlements in Istanbul, the city planners were so strongly influencing the Conference that they began to call it the Cities Summit. Our Franciscans International delegates from India

and Brazil called the attention of the assembly reminding all that the majority of people in the world still live in rural areas. So we could not have a world summit on Human Settlements without even taking into consideration the rural population and the reason why they are fleeing to the cities. As a result a whole new theme was introduced into the Summit expressed in many places in the final documents as the “Rural Urban Linkages”. This emphasizes the point too, that we should no longer try to be the voice of our sisters and brothers from Asia, Africa and Latin America, but open the doors so that they can come and have their own voices heard.

At the Copenhagen World Conference on Social Development the Franciscans International delegation were co-founders of the Values Caucus. It is a forum based on a commitment to values shared by all of humankind. It affirms that such values exist, and we believe that choosing to live by these values will lead to a global future of peaceful cooperation in an interdependent and culturally diverse world. We believe that without this commitment to shared values, humanity will continue to live under the threat of war, subsistent standards of living, and depletion of the natural resources of our endangered planet. Among other objectives the Values Caucus participates in the work of the United Nations by formulating values related concepts and language for documents and advocating for their inclusion and by developing and implementing values related programmes and workshops. One of the concrete activities of the Values Caucus is a bi-weekly informal off the record coffee session with one of the UN Ambassadors for about an hour on pertinent UN issues or country priorities at the UN. Not too long ago we had an extraordinary session with the Ambassador of a very large and multicultural country. The Ambassador confessed to us that as he prepared to share his experience and priorities with us he realized how very little time he spends on real values considerations and how much time and energy he spends defending his country’s interests. “We must help them make a shift”, he said, “from such an emphasis on national interests to some essential shared values in our UN decision process”. In our later evaluation we thought that just causing him to think about his mission at the UN and the need for a values oriented position, made the caucus worth while.

In the area of disarmament, perhaps one of our greatest successes was the Nobel Peace Prize we won success as members of the International Campaign to ban landmines. We were among the earliest to join the campaign and received a significant amount of support and enthusiasm from our grass roots local members, to national groups and the Franciscan Fam-

ily as a whole. In this area our Canadian group really helped lead the way by actively participating as our FI delegation in the most significant international meetings especially the Ottawa Conference. Thousands and thousands of letters from our members from around the world, North-South East and West, were transmitted to world leaders. We had prayer services on the feast of St Francis, Instrument of Peace in the main entrance to the UN. In a most symbolic and non-violent gesture, small children pleaded for exchanging landmines for flowers and gave bouquets to UN Ambassadors who promised to eliminate the landmines that killed and maimed so many innocent children and women. Today, perhaps because of so many different and significant activities many nations have already ratified the Landmine Ban Treaty.

For the next two years we hope to work especially hard on the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty — particularly the most important issue — to cancel the debts of the world’s most impoverished countries. We have enthusiastically joined the International Jubilee 2000 campaign to raise the consciousness of the world’s financial institutions on the needs and benefits of such a pardon. John Paul II never ceases to mention this point too. A global momentum is building that we hope will cause a positive response as we begin the next millennium. The alleviation of the overburdening and unjust debt of the world’s most impoverished countries is the most significant step towards eradication of poverty possible.

We are also looking forward to participate on all different levels of the United Nations new ten-year “Culture of Peace and Non-Violence” programme now before the General Assembly. We hope that schools, universities, parishes, retreat centres, and all levels of ministry will be able to contribute in this effort to transform our violent culture to a true culture of Peace.

5. Limitations

Perhaps the first and foremost limitation is the very size and complexity of the United Nations System in itself. If you have become just a little dizzy trying to keep all these structures I have been explaining straight in your head, come to the UN for a couple of weeks and you will get thoroughly confused. This is something we have to deal with at greater length. Before I came to New York I thought that we at Franciscans International were very wise to choose just three issues to deal with at the UN: Care of Creation, Peacemaking, and Concern for the Poor. But as I get more and more involved I see more and more clearly that those three interrelated priorities cover

almost every single aspect of UN activity. We are all limited, so our limitations must be carefully weighed and evaluated. Then we must commit ourselves to do what realistically can be accomplished.

We do not wish to be the voice of the poor but to give the poor their own voice in the UN System. We, and the UN, need to hear the voices of the grass roots person especially the impoverished of Asia, Africa and Latin America. South-North travel to the UN Centres like New York, Geneva, and Vienna, is the most expensive. So those with the least need the most to have their voices heard. Our financial limitations sometimes exclude the very ones we should hear from in these forums.

The work on international advocacy itself is still somewhat culturally limited. Dom Helder Camara, the great Brazilian Bishop of the poor once said, "When I was giving bread to the poor I was called a saint. When I asked why the poor do not have their own bread I was called a communist". We have not yet been able to establish a serious commitment on the part of the majority of our leadership to invest in a long range presence at the UN even in New York. The Methodist Church has a 12 story UN Church Centre at the door of the UN, the Episcopal Church has their International UN Offices in their own 10 story building a block away. The Bahai Community, has extensive offices and a permanent staff of 35 for UN activities just in New York. While these are not the most important aspects, they do show us that our own substantial commitment is not even equal to what we have invested in one parish, school or university.

Another limitation that we must overcome in the future is that of not yet effectively collaborating with UN projects and financing. Many of the activities that our membership are participating in, are also UN priorities, and sometimes would even be eligible for at least partial UN financing or grants.

Although we have begun, we must learn to better use the advantages of internet communication much more than we have so far. The possibilities of world consultations and information sharing are growing each day. List servers could daily connect our experts in different fields and have them input their expertise to meetings, conferences and documents at a distance. Here too, the South still has the most expensive internet connections and some kind of permanent concrete solidarity must be realized.

6. Conclusions:

More and more religious communities are beginning to apply for and receive UN Consultative Status. Maryknoll, the Augustinians, Good Shepherd Sisters, Congregations of Saint Joseph, Sisters of Notre Dame, among others.

It is a good and important place to minister an international expression of missionary evangelization in its fullest sense.

Worldwide religious communities can participate in New York and around the world in UN Specialized Agencies and World Conferences. We can bring our southern sisters and brothers to our New York teams and make a contribution that few other NGO's can make.

There is also a need to hear the voice of youth. Sixty-four per cent of the world population is under 25. In 1997, not one UN Mission had any staff member under 25. The NGO's are not any better. Promote the participation of young religious in your organizations and support them to work on your teams at the different UN Centres.

Care for creation — the environment is an urgent concern of the Church and the world.

If you have or can have a presence at the Centre for the UN Environmental Program in Nairobi, Kenya, by all means do not hesitate to do so.

Please forgive me if I failed to mention any or all the things you came to hear about. If you have any questions I will be happy to answer them to the best of my ability now or at a later time. Thank you for listening. I look forward to speaking with you on an informal basis too.

I have shared what we are in the process of trying to do as Franciscans International at the UN. I hope I have been honest enough and given you a somewhat objective view of the possibilities and limitations. What encourages us at Franciscans International and keeps us going is that beautiful honest saying of Saint Francis: "Let us begin again today, for up until now little or nothing have we accomplished".

Thank you.

Brigid Reynolds, SM and Sean Healy, SMA

Transformation of Society and the Role of Advocacy - An Irish Case Study -

Presentation to SEDOS, 1 December 1998

(Brigid Reynolds, S.M. and Sean Healy, S.M.A. are directors of the Justice Commission of the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI). For almost 30 years they have been active on issues of socio-economic policy. They both worked in Africa until the early 1980's. They have conducted more than 700 workshops and seminars involving more than 30,000 people. They have worked on a number of government bodies and task forces, dealing with a wide range of public policy issues. They have played an active role in securing social partnership status for the community; and voluntary sector in Ireland. They have also written and published widely. Among their publications are a series of ten books on public policy issues which they have edited and to each of which they have contributed. The most recent publication in this series, entitled Social Policy in Ireland: Principles, Practice and Problems, was launched in March, 1998, by the Irish Prime Minister, Mr Bertie Ahern.

Their principal interests lie in:

- Addressing the values issues at the core of public policy*
- Empowering and enabling poor people and other excluded groups to participate in shaping the world*
- Developing a relevant, justice-based spirituality, and*
- Developing ideas and models of good practice which will help to build a better future for all people).*

That the world is at a moment of great change and the appropriate responses required are not so widely appreciated. We believe that this is one of the great moments of change in human history. Such a claim could easily be seen as arrogant. However, it is based on a reading of the present reality which sees four eras of history coming to an end or a resolution simultaneously.

An Historical Perspective

The first of these eras is a 200-year period of human history. This period was shaped by the French Revolution of 1789 and the American Revolution of 1776, but shaped even more importantly by the Industrial Revolution. It is an era that has seen the dominance of the industrial type of development. In this era society set itself a project of production, to produce enough to meet the needs of all people. We suggest that this era is coming to a resolution simply

because society is now in a position to produce all that is needed in society. Our world's problem now is that we have surpluses. There are many people in the world dying of starvation at this time. But this is not a production problem. The world now has the capacity to produce enough to ensure that there is nobody in material need.

We are also coming to the end of a 500-year period of human history. This is the era which began with the Renaissance and the Reformation and was dominated by science, an era in which society believed that science could solve all human problems and answer every question the world had to ask. It was an era of great individualism and an era when the political and economic values of the post-Reformation age replaced religious values as the dominant ones in society. That too is coming to a resolution as we come to realise the limits of science, of individualism and of the dangers that are inherent for society in giving politics and economics the primary value base.

We are also coming to the end of a 2,000-year

period of human history and this is the period of history that flowed from the cultures of Athens, Jerusalem and Rome. It is an era maybe most clearly identified for us in the concept of European imperialism, an era in which Europe and the people of European origin have been dominant in our world. This too is coming to an end. The centre of the world is no longer in the Atlantic or in the North American/European axis. This is also a 2,000-year period of history which has seen the dominance of the White race. The White race is a minority on this planet and yet it has been dominant for two millennia. This too is coming to an end.

Finally the fourth era that is coming to an end is a 5,000-year period of human history. We won't argue about this particular figure – maybe it goes back further. But it is the era of male domination, the era of patriarchy, where society has been structured in such a way that it has been dominated by masculine values, masculine priorities and masculine structures. We suggest that this dominance is coming to an end in our time.

Shaping the Future

All of these eras are coming to an end simultaneously. Consequently we are at a moment of great social change. This is a unique historical moment in which to shape the future. The implications for society are enormous. The future of society for quite some time to come will be shaped in the years immediately ahead. It is important at this moment of great change that those involved in institutions such as government, religion, education, health care, etc. should understand the nature of this transition. They need to have a clear understanding of what is happening at present and of the kind of future they wish to build. Only then will they be in a position to know which forces they should support, which forces they need to resist and which forces they need to transform.

The future is not predetermined. As Christians we have an obligation to think very seriously about the future. Everything we do is, in fact, built on some understanding of the present and some vision of the future. We may not be conscious of this fact, yet it is true. As Christians we should not shirk our responsibility to face up to the implications of what we do. After all, we are meant to be bringing the reign of God to fruition and that involves moving the world from where it is towards where God wants it to be.

We live in a world which promotes constant economic progress. Wealth, employment and production

are growing steadily. The conventional economic wisdom argues that continuing on this path for the foreseeable future will produce a world in which everyone has a stake and where the good life can be accessed by all. It presumes that everyone, in a world population twice as large as it is today, can reasonably aspire to and achieve the high-consumption lifestyle enjoyed by the world's affluent minority at present. This is seen as progress.

This conventional economic vision of the future is unattainable. Environmental degradation, encroaching deserts, unemployment, starvation, widening gaps between rich and poor, exclusion from participation in either decision-making or development of society: these are the global realities confronting decision-makers today. Economic globalisation and environmental stress are accompanied by social inequality and endemic deprivation. Millions of people in the richer parts of the world recognise these problems and are seriously concerned about the plight of the billions of people on all continents whose lived experience is one of constant exclusion from the resources and the power that shapes this world.

People feel powerless. The media present one vision of the future and assume it is the only desirable or viable future. Politicians, more concerned about the next election, or simply intent on staying in power, rarely discuss the fundamental causes of, or long-term solutions to, the issues and problems they confront every day. It is crucial that questions be asked concerning the core assumptions that underpin and support the present situation. What model of development is being followed? Is it likely to produce a good life for all the world's citizens? What constitutes progress? What are the underpinning values on which decisions are made in shaping the future? Are we at ease with these values and the structures that flow from them? Is it possible to envision a future where everyone really would have a stake, be respected, have meaningful work and an adequate income, where all could genuinely participate? These are key questions. The world is at a major crossroads. It has the resources and capacity to choose a wide range of different options. Decisions made now will have major effects on the generations of the future. Consequently, it is essential that the questions raised here be examined by leaders, by policy-makers and by people generally.

A Gospel Perspective

We start from the belief that the world, as it is now, is not the kind of world envisaged in the Gospels. We do not accept the divisions we see. Like

many we wish to work for a society where “*the hungry are filled with good things*” (Lk 1:53). Taking inspiration from the Beatitudes we work with Jesus for the coming of the Kingdom where the poor will be happy because they have sufficiency, where those who hunger and thirst for what is right will see their vision concretised in the structures of society, where the gentle (or “the lowly”) will be guaranteed their right to a part of the earth’s resources (“*They shall have the earth for their heritage*” Mt 5:5). With St Paul we are conscious that the “*entire creation is groaning in one great act of giving birth*” (Rom 8:22). We want to play a positive role in this great act of giving birth to a future society.

How can this Gospel message be made relevant in our mission today? In recent years the Church has developed a large body of social teaching. We find in this teaching the guidelines needed to point the way for us pilgrim people. From Pope Leo XIII, who began the call for major changes in the socio-economic order to the present day, the Church is calling us to transform society. We recall that Paul VI in **Populorum Progressio** called for “*bold transformations, innovations that go deep*” (n. 32). The Synod of Bishops (1971) in its document **Justice in the World** said that “*Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel*” (n. 6). Pope John Paul II in **Laborem Exercens** calls for a complete analysis to reveal unjust structures so that they may be examined and transformed to build a just earth (n. 2). More recently in **Centesimus Annus** he talked about the virtues needed to be involved in this transformation. “*To destroy such structures (of sin which impede the full realisation of those who are in any way oppressed by them) and replace them with more authentic forms of living in community is a task which demands courage and patience*” (n. 38). Recent social teaching alerts us not only to the structures that oppress people but also to the structures that cause destruction to the environment. “*Today the ecological crisis has assumed such proportions as to be the responsibility of everyone ... there is an order in the universe which must be respected ... the ecological crisis is a moral issue*” (Pope John Paul II, January 1, 1990).

Deepening Divisions

When we look at our world today we see deep division and widespread exclusion. Worldwide more than four billion people do not have the resources required to live life with basic dignity. We acknowledge that the depth of poverty varies. At present more

than one billion people on this planet live in absolute poverty i.e. with an income of less than \$370 a year. This figure has risen from 500 million in the early 1980’s. Today one million children under five die every month in the countries of the ‘South’. The poverty of other better off countries is none the less real even though it is not as extreme.

Yet the world as a unit is not poor. 83 per cent of the world’s total wealth is controlled by less than 20 per cent of the world’s population. This wealthy 20 per cent are in a position to use their wealth and power to strengthen their own position at the expense of the poor nations of the South. There are many other things we could say concerning the economic/political/cultural/social reality of our world today. But in the context of this group it is not necessary to develop this dimension.

An Alternative Vision

Is this the way our society should be organised? Is this the way God wishes our world to be organised? It seems to us that the obvious answer to both questions is in the negative. So two further questions present themselves: what kind of **alternative future** do we have to offer? And what are we doing to articulate and make this alternative concrete? These questions become especially important given the rapid changes in our world today. When the politically and economically powerful in our world address the future, they offer us today only one vision – that of a society with expanding production (*using more technology*), fewer people employed and with the remainder engaged in a life of leisure. They see power as being in the hands of an even smaller *élite*. The most important people in such a society are seen as those who facilitate the more efficient running of the production process from which all of life’s benefits are presumed to flow. The majority would have no say in the shaping of such a society and would not participate in its operation to any great extent. The very meaning of life would be readily altered, human rights would be eroded, human dignity would not be respected, human development would not be facilitated and the environment would be exploited.

We believe this vision needs to be seriously challenged. What would an alternative vision entail? What would an alternative future look like? Christian values state clearly that we should not accept the present growing divisions in our society but should, instead, seek to eliminate them. We need to search for and strive to achieve balance in our values, goals and priorities. This will require a shift of emphasis. We need to move

from quantitative to qualitative values and goals, from organisational to personal and interpersonal values and goals. We need to move from values that are economically based towards values that put far more emphasis on the real needs and aspirations of people. We need to move from mechanistic to organic values, from masculine towards feminine priorities. We need as a world to change direction, to find and maintain balance in all our relationships — with ourselves and God, with people we are close to and people in the wider world and in our relationship with the environment. A world moving along these balanced lines would be a just world based on the **biblical understanding of justice as a harmony which comes from fidelity to right relationships with God, with our neighbour and with the environment.**

Advocacy: A Ministry of Influence

Substantial social change is required if we are to move towards a just world. The Gospel and Catholic social teaching call all Christians to be involved in transformation. This transformation takes place at both the personal and societal levels. Each generation of religious has responded to this invitation which is “ever ancient ever new”. What is the appropriate response today?

Traditionally religious focused on their institutions e.g. schools, hospitals, etc. They tried to create a just society through the graduates from these institutions. Their work concentrated on preparing good leaders whom, they hoped, would in turn transform society. This strategy has produced its successes. However, as we have seen, there is a lot of poverty and social division, even in countries with a long Christian tradition. We find ourselves asking the question why? Part of the explanation, we believe, lies in the lack of awareness of the structural dimensions of society among Christian leaders. We need a strategy that has a greater appreciation of the structural dimensions of justice. As well as good people we need good structures that promote equity and right relationships.

History is teaching us that a new strategy is needed. We believe that Christian leaders need to be involved where the structures of society are being developed. This is an arena where we become a voice, among many others,

- developing an accurate social analysis;
- articulating a vision of society;
- providing models of good practice and doing all this in an integrated way which ensures that the lived experience of all, but especially of poor and ex-

cluded people, is included at all stages and in all arenas of the process.

Where we formerly controlled and managed the process through religious institutions, now we can only hope to influence the process. Today the task is that of discovering how to have influence without having control. One way of influencing the development of society is through advocacy. We will look at the elements of advocacy and the skills needed later in this paper. But first we need to ask ourselves if we believe advocacy is a valid ministry for religious.

Where we affirm that advocacy is a ministry in which Church personnel should be involved we should also commit ourselves to the consequences of this affirmation. What resources are we prepared to make available to this work? Religious have been and still are extraordinarily generous in the resourcing of their institutions. Not only have personnel been provided and trained to a very high standard, but religious leaders have tried to provide facilities and up-to-date equipment for these institutions. To date the work of advocacy is resourced in a very haphazard and very meagre way. This ministry tends to be done by very committed people who are already fully employed in another ministry. Those involved in the ministry of advocacy tend to find it difficult to get the financial resources needed for this work.

Core Meaning

If we are to work for social change we need to understand how social change can be generated. We can then go on to explore the role of advocacy in a strategy to generate social change.

Every society has a dominant core meaning. By this we mean the principal values, attitudes and assumptions that permeate the society. For the most part people subscribe to these values, attitudes and assumptions without question or even without advertising to their existence. They provide the meaning that carries society along with a certain sense of purpose. When we use the word “meaning” we are speaking of culture. A society may have a number of cultures within it but at any particular point in history one of these will be dominant. There are many examples of how a dominant core meaning can maintain a very unjust social structure. A case in point would be South Africa as it was until recently with its unjust political, economic and social structures of *apartheid*. It would not have been possible to maintain this apartheid system if some ‘explanation’ or ‘justification’ for its existence were not provided. The Afrikaaners

could justify apartheid to themselves at least. This enabled the system to be continued. It should be noted that the people who benefit from this dominant core meaning are in a position to ensure that it is transmitted to others.

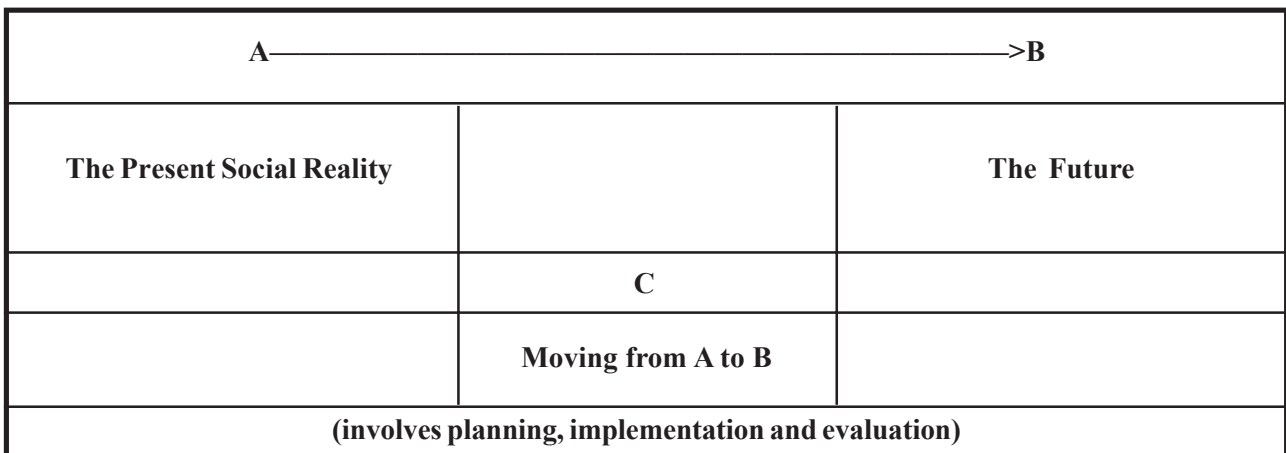
A society must have meaning if it is to survive. It cannot survive in its present form if its dominant meaning is undermined or not transmitted.

Whether we are addressing rural development or the environment, urbanisation or education or any other element of the world’s future we are involved with social change. Changing meaning is the key to social change. It is changing meaning which provides the energy to do the political organising required to change economic structures. These changed economic structures will lead to new social structures.

Key elements of core meaning

If the core meaning were changed then society would change. The old order would not be able to justify or explain its continued existence. It would be replaced by a new order based on the new meaning being transmitted. It is very important that this core meaning be articulated by each individual and by the society as a whole. Our own meaning is the meaning each of us transmits. This meaning is closely linked to two things – our analysis of the present social reality and our vision of what future society should be about. From these (*whether articulated or not*) flow decisions on what we do. In a society context both of these elements are central to policy. After all policy is aimed at moving from one towards the other. **Figure 1** illustrates this process.

Figure 1



To illustrate what is involved here we simply take an example from Europe today. At the moment the

dominant meaning in Europe tells us that we must produce more and export more. This, we are told, will result in more jobs and eventually bring prosperity to all. This is a misreading of the present social reality. There is no failure of production. What is breaking down is the connection between jobs and production. We have seen the emergence of new technologies, robotics, microchips, computers, new technologies in food production, etc. These new technologies in effect mean that we can produce vast surpluses of any goods we wish to focus on. They provide new jobs but not on the scale of the number of jobs replaced.

This dominant meaning in the EU today also misreads the future. There will never again be ‘jobs for all’ in the traditional understanding of that phrase. The dominant meaning of our society, however, still operates as if there will be jobs for all. Our schools prepare people for such a society. Our mass media convince people that this is the way the world must develop. Government statements would have us believe that we can again have a full employment situation. We believe that full employment in the traditional sense is not possible. This is especially true when we realise the world’s population is growing by ¼ million every day – and is likely to do so for the next 50 years! However, everyone has the right to work and to an adequate income. The challenge is to build a society, a world, where everyone has meaningful work and sufficient income to live life with basic dignity.

The children who will graduate from secondary schools in 2015 A.D. are already alive. Yet the question of what sort of continent or world we want in 2015 A.D. is not addressed in a way which would involve the majority of people. The shapers and car-

riers of meaning in European society seem to be operating out of an inaccurate analysis of the present

social reality and seem to have a very narrow and questionable vision of the future of European society. Such misreading is not confined to Europe.

Carriers of meaning

The major carriers of meaning in society are education, mass media and religion. These are like the cardio-vascular system of the human body. Mass media and education persuade people to accept the dominant culture. The explanation and justification of the political and economic structures are transmitted in various ways through the press, radio, television and the school system.

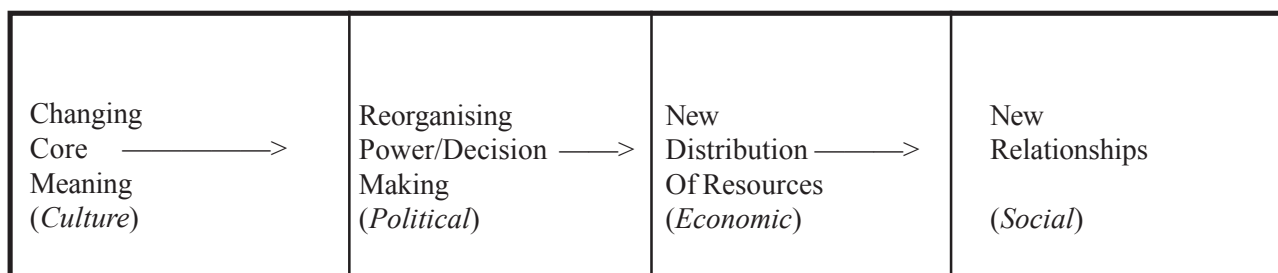
A close examination will show that the press, radio and television throughout the world are, for the most part, owned and/or controlled by those at the top of the economic and political structures. Consequently it is not surprising that the values, the meaning they carry and transmit, are supportive of the *status quo*.

Changing Core Meaning

People's core meaning must change if they are to generate social change. We believe very strongly that as many people as possible should analyse and discuss the present reality and the future they wish to build. Then they will be participating in the first step in generating social change: changing their own core meaning. If people's core meaning does not change then they will simply continue striving to maintain the *status quo* until it becomes unbearable.

Once people's core meaning changes they begin to make different decisions. These decisions impact on resources. The new core meaning will provide the energy to do the political organising that is necessary to change the way resources are distributed. When this occurs we will have new relationships developed between people, new social structures. **Figure 2** illustrates this process.

Figure 2



The school system in most places follows a banking understanding of education, a process which sees the pupils as empty receptacles to be filled with 'knowledge' which is processed by the teacher. The values, the meaning, being transmitted socialise the pupils into accepting the existing society as it is. So we can say that the *status quo* is promoted by the mass media and by the school system.

In the whole area of meaning in society, religion plays a very important part. Religion has often been used to legitimate the *status quo* even though the *status quo* might be very oppressive. How often has religion preached that the present situation must be accepted because it is God's will and it will only last for a few years by which time we will pass on to our eternal reward? How often has religion told people that there is no need to do anything about their suffering in this world as it will soon pass and "there will be pie in the sky when they die"? Not only are people in such situations being told that the *status quo* has to be accepted but also that God has ordained it so!

Changing meaning is the key to social change. Changing meaning (*culture*) leads to changing decisions (*political*) which leads to changing resource distribution (*economic*) which, in turn, leads to new relationships (*social structures*).

Advocacy: The Process

Advocacy is simply part of a strategy to generate social change. It is, however, an important part of such a strategy. If we believe that the local, the national and the world situation involves injustices and needs to be changed then advocacy can be a key element in this work.

The starting point for any group's or organisation's advocacy work is some agreement on the analysis of the present situation and some agreement on a vision of the future towards which the group or organisation wishes to work. There is no use trying to communicate with the public if the group does not agree on its analysis and vision. Not all details need to be agreed but there should be substantial agreement on the issues being taken into the advocacy arena.

In preparing a base-line analysis it is crucial that the research being quoted and the claims being made about the present situation are accurate. This is a key issue. Nobody should be able to effectively undermine the research. Otherwise credibility will be lost and change will not happen.

In outlining a desirable vision of the future it is not necessary to have all the details in place. However, some clear sense of direction is required which is credible and will engage the imagination and commitment of others and lead them to act.

Key Messages

Before moving into the public arena it is very important to identify and agree on the key messages which the group wishes to transmit. It is important to recognise that not all the information or ideas the group has may be useable in this context. Choices must be made.

In making these choices the group should ensure that its key messages are effective. An effective message will show people what is happening and why it is happening. In this way it promotes understanding which in turn helps to change attitudes. As far as possible the message should be short, simple, specific and focused.

There are three situations in which the group or organisation will need messages:

- Pro-active messages: These are situations where the group or organisation itself is setting the agenda and communicating as it wishes e.g. re the situation of small farmers in poor countries.

- Reactive messages: These are situations in which the group will be asked to react to developments in its area of interest e.g. re the impact of World Trade Organisation decisions on small farmers.

- Crises messages: These are messages the group will need to prepare in advance to deal with emergencies and crises which occur e.g. re central American hurricanes or African famines damaging small farmers.

While all these situations are important the most important are the pro-active messages. These will be the ones over which the group has most control. They should always be clearly seen to serve the corporate mission of the group as well as its objectives.

It is very important that the group or organisation ensure that its own agenda maintains priority. Endlessly responding to crises is not enough and can consume all one's energy and time. It is gratifying to see the reaction of people when the group or organisation responds to crises. But it must be careful to ensure the crises do not take over.

Responses to crises should as far as possible draw people's attention back to the pro-active messages e.g. re the situation of small farmers in poorer countries.

Target Audiences

The key messages to be transmitted in any particular situation will depend on the audience being addressed. It is very important to identify the different audiences the group or organisation wishes to address. Possible audiences in Europe could include:

- The European Commission
- The European Parliament
- The European Council of Ministers
- European National Governments
- Parliamentarians in National Parliaments
- Political Parties
- Trade Unions (*National and International*)
- Business Organisations (*National and International*)
- Farming Organisations (*National and International*)
- The Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations
- "Third World" Organisations and Networks
- Religious and Missionaries
- Congregational and Society Leaders (*Individual and Conferences*)
- Various Church Organisations (*Local, National and International*)
- Bishops (*Individuals and Conferences*)
- Other Churches
- Inter-Church Organisations (e.g. *W.C.C.*)
- Various Communities of Specialists
- Media (*Reporters, Producers, Editors, etc.*)
- Multilateral Organisations (e.g. *I.M.F., World Bank*).

This is not a comprehensive listing but it gives some idea of the scale of possible audiences. It is important for the group or organisation to prioritise its audiences and act accordingly e.g. some of its efforts should be focused on churches but NOT ALL!

Key messages must be tailored to particular audi-

ences to enable the group reach its priority audiences and to help achieve its overall objectives.

It is important to remember that situations change and, consequently, messages may also need to change. If the group is to be dynamic it must be rigorous in reassessing its messages on a regular basis to ensure they are relevant and effective as well as Gospel-based.

How to Communicate Key Messages to Target Audiences

There are a wide variety of means through which messages may be transmitted and some are far more appropriate than others for particular audiences. Face to face meetings, letters, summary documents, longer research papers, international media, national media, local media (*electronic or written media at all three levels*), newsletters, submissions aimed at specific audience(s), public meetings, assemblies, chapters, action-alert documents, databases, directories; these are some of the means which may be used. The group/organisation should identify the most appropriate means for communicating with each target audience.

It is important to realise that:

- Each of the target audiences has a full agenda;
- Each has a limited carrying capacity for items on its agenda;
- Consequently, getting priority on the target audience's agenda means relegating some other item on that agenda;
- Everything already on the agenda is seen as important;
- So any new item must be seen to be more important before it can gain its place;

All communications should have:

- Dynamism;
- Creativity in presentation;

Otherwise they may not even be considered.

Once the key messages, target audiences and means of communication have been identified, a list of tasks should be drawn up and detailed plans for implementation should be outlined. Then it is simply a matter of implementing the plan.

Evaluation on an ongoing basis is essential in any advocacy. This evaluation should be built into the plan from the very beginning. Much learning can flow from ongoing evaluation once it is taken seriously and once

its conclusions are built into the ongoing advocacy.

Crises will emerge. Not everything will go according to plan. At times the plan may go 'off the rails' or be side-tracked by other events. Such crises should always be seen as opportunities. They can be used as new opportunities to restate the organisation's position or to add an extra dimension to what has already been presented.

CORI: An Irish Case Study

The CORI Justice Commission was established in 1981. It established an office in 1982. Since its establishment the CORI Justice Commission has had the biblical understanding of justice at the centre of its deliberations and has tried to be strategic in putting it on the wider agenda. In its work it focuses on four key areas:

- Public policy
- Enabling and empowerment
- Spirituality, and
- Partnership projects with other bodies and agencies.

In developing its work in the public policy arena the Commission has focused principally on three key areas. These are:

- The future of work – of special concern given the persistence of unemployment and the right of every person to meaningful work.
- Income distribution systems – of special concern because of the continuing failure of the welfare State to tackle poverty effectively.
- Participation mechanisms – of special concern because of the democratic deficit being experienced in a democratic country where the voice of the powerful tends to be listened to much more readily than the voice of people who are poor, unemployed, or experiencing exclusion for a variety of other reasons.

The CORI Justice Commission has developed a comprehensive and integrated advocacy programme around these three core issues, while also working on a wide range of other public policy issues. We now outline some elements of this programme in a summary form to give you some idea of the work being done by the CORI Justice Commission.

- **Education, consciousness raising and conscientization.** In the beginning it was necessary

to do a comprehensive education, consciousness raising and conscientization programme to ensure that people became more familiar with the issues of poverty, unemployment and exclusion. Many workshops, seminars and social analysis training programmes were organised and given by the Commission staff. In the beginning these were conducted principally with religious and people with whom religious worked. In later years these were made available to a wide range of other people, organisations and groups, many of whom did not have a Christian orientation to their work. These varied from grassroots groups to national policy makers. More than 600 of these have been held over the course of the past 16 years involving more than 25,000 participants.

- **Socio-economic review.** For more than a decade the Commission has produced an annual socio-economic review. From modest beginnings this has evolved into a comprehensive book of more than 100 pages. It analyses and critiques the present socio-economic reality of Ireland from the perspective of the biblical understanding of justice. It proposes specific national objectives in 12 sectors and outlines detailed policies that could be implemented by government if it wishes to reach these national objectives. All of this is done within a fiscal stance that shows how these policies could be financed without damaging the economy.

- **National budget.** Each year the CORI Justice Commission makes a pre-budget submission to government along the lines developed in the socio-economic review. Meetings are held with government ministers and officials as well as opposition leaders and other organisations to discuss the analysis and the policy proposals. On the day after the Government announces its budget the Commission produces a 25-page detailed analysis and critique of the budget. This document identifies the beneficiaries of government budget decisions and shows how different decisions could have led to a fairer distribution of the available resources.

- **Social policy conference.** The Commission has hosted an annual social policy conference since 1988. Each year this conference analyses one topic. An analysis of the topic is provided together with a critique from a justice perspective. Policy alternatives at both the macro and micro levels are outlined and critiqued. This conference has always been opened by the President of Ireland or by a government minister. It is attended by about 200 people including representatives of political parties, government departments, trade unions, employers, farming

and community and voluntary organisations, religious leaders and academics as well as a wide range of activists involved with the topic being discussed.

- **Pilot projects.** The Commission has also been involved in piloting an innovative programme that created 1,000 part-time jobs for long-term unemployed people in the social economy. When this approach to tackling unemployment was proposed by the Commission, the Government asked us to pilot the idea. This we did in six pilot areas with the help of 162 organisations who were prepared to create these positions for unemployed people. After three years of piloting and another year of transition this approach has now been accepted and mainstreamed by government. Once the pilot phase was completed we handed the programme over to government and now play an advisory role in its ongoing development.

- **Networking.** The Commission has a number of networks which it anchors and/or resources. One of these consists of religious with responsibility for justice issues within their congregations. Another is for activists and groups involved in this work at a local level in different parts of the country. This network has regional and national meetings. A third network consists of national organisations addressing issues of poverty and social exclusion.

- **Submissions to government and other bodies.** The Commission produces a constant stream of submissions and briefings for government departments, parliamentary committees, national bodies of trade unions, employers, etc. These submissions cover a wide range of issues ranging from foreign policy to local development. They are often accompanied by oral presentations to these bodies, committees, etc.

- **Publications.** The Commission produces other publications as well as those already outlined. These include a regular newsletter, briefings at election times, studies on topics such as basic income, etc.

- **Representation on public bodies.** Because of its involvement in public policy issues, Justice Commission staff are now members of a range of public policy bodies. Some of these are national 'think-tank' type bodies. Others deal with specific policy issues ranging from unemployment to taxation policy, from housing to rural development.

- **Media.** All the activities already listed are accompanied by a range of communications activities. One such area of activity involves briefing edi-

tors, journalists, researchers, presenters and producers and helping them find suitable material for programmes and articles that challenge the *status quo*. Another area is the creation of media events around issues to ensure coverage. We also respond to a steady stream of requests for interviews, comments and debate on issues in the public policy arena. In all cases great care is taken to proceed along the lines already outlined in this paper.

- **European/Global focus.** For more than a decade the commission has ensured that a European focus is included in its activities. This is especially important where the key strategic issues of work, income and participation are concerned. Many decisions made at EU level have major implications for Ireland in these areas. Consequently, the EU institutions have also been the focus of advocacy activity. The global dimension is also a constant factor in the commission's work. This is of special importance when proposing policies as these should be viable in a global context and not simply at the national or continental level.

Impact

In terms of the strategic issues already outlined, has all of this activity had any impact? We believe it has been very successful in highlighting these issues in the public arena as well as in the policy-making arena.

On the issue of **income**: poverty has a much higher priority on the public agenda now than it had in the past. The public awareness of the relative failure of policies to tackle poverty has pushed government to seek solutions within the present policy framework and through alternative approaches. CORI Justice Commission has proposed the introduction of a basic income system as a successor to the present social welfare and taxation systems. Government has now commissioned three major studies to analyse the impact of introducing a basic income system in Ireland. A green paper on basic income will be published by Government in mid-1999. This will be designed to produce a wide-ranging public debate on these issues. Government has also produced a national anti-poverty strategy and involved a wide range of groups in developing this. While its targets are not as high as we would wish, it does mark substantial progress from the present situation.

On the issue of **work**: the need for alternative policies to tackle unemployment has been recognised and acted upon by government. The piloting and even-

tual adoption of our proposals for a more humane approach towards unemployed people involved in government-funded programmes has had a very positive impact. Side by side with these developments we have also sought to highlight the need for recognition of unpaid work and the contribution it makes to national development. From a very difficult beginning slow progress is now being made on this aspect of the work issue.

On the issue of **participation**: in Ireland a national social partnership system has operated since 1987. This brought together three pillars of 'social partners', i.e. trade unions, employers and farmers, who sat down with government and negotiated a three-year national programme covering pay, taxation, social services, etc. From its inception CORI Justice Commission argued for the inclusion of a fourth pillar representing groups such as the unemployed, poor people and women who were not represented in their own right at these negotiations. After nine years of advocacy work, the establishment of a fourth pillar was agreed by government in 1996. CORI Justice Commission is one of the groups now recognised as a social partner by government. Others include the National Organisation of the Unemployed, the National Women's Council and the National Youth Council. As a direct result of the inclusion of this pillar, the latest agreement (entitled *Partnership 2000 for Inclusion, Employment and Competitiveness*) places social inclusion at its core. It includes a separate chapter on this topic with a wide range of commitments to be implemented by government before the end of 1999. This is simply one example of improved participation for those who were previously excluded. We can point to a range of other developments at both local and national levels. While a great deal remains to be done on this issue as on the others, substantial progress has been made.

Conclusion

Points to remember in the work of advocacy:

- Recognise the small successes and celebrate them.
- Persist – "*be brave, I have conquered the world*" (Jn 16:33).
- Continue to update the research.
- Do not allow 'the best to be the enemy of the good'.
- Continually challenge ourselves about our motivation. Whose kingdom are we building? Be ready to "*account for the hope that is in you*" (1 Pt 3:15).

Une Economie de Justice et une Eglise Engagée

Le rôle de l'Eglise dans la crise économique asiatique

(NDLR. Le Forum de Séoul qui rassemblait une centaine de personnes, appartenant à l'Eglise catholique et à des organisations non gouvernementales, appelle à une économie plus juste et à l'engagement de l'Eglise. Une restructuration économique en faveur du peuple et une réorientation de l'Eglise vers la solidarité sont les principaux éléments de cet appel. Voici le texte intégral du communiqué final de ce forum du 24 au 29 Août 1998).

Introduction

1 - Nous, les participants au Forum "La crise économique en Asie et le rôle de l'Eglise", nous sommes réunis à une centaine environ, à l'université jésuite de Sogang et dans la paroisse internationale catholique de St François, à Séoul du 24 au 29 Août 1998.

2 - Ce forum s'est réuni à l'initiative du mouvement international catholique pour les affaires culturelles et intellectuelles (ICMICA-Pax Romana) et l'Institut de théologie Woori (WTI) de Séoul soutenu par la communauté des femmes catholiques coréennes pour un nouveau monde (KCWC), le comité catholique pour les droits de l'homme en Corée (CHRC) et la société coréenne pour la solidarité internationale et la démocratie participative (PSPD), afin de réfléchir sur la crise économique asiatique qui commença avec l'effondrement du baht thaïlandais en juillet 1997 et s'étendit rapidement à d'autres pays d'Asie orientale et du sud-est, donnant lieu à des banqueroutes, du chômage et à un appauvrissement sur une grande échelle.

3 - Nous sommes des laïcs, des religieux, des prêtres et des évêques, membres de l'Eglise et membres d'organismes non gouvernementaux (ONG) et autres issus de la société civile, originaires de la région Asie-Pacifique (particulièrement des pays les plus touchés par la crise, Thaïlande, Corée et Indonésie). Nous nous sommes réunis avec des collègues d'Europe et d'Amérique (des Etats-Unis et du Mexique).

4 - Par notre engagement chrétien nous avons l'obligation de :

- analyser la nature et la cause de la crise;
- de les juger du point de vue de notre réflexion

théologique sur les enseignements de Jésus et des enseignements sociaux de l'Eglise chrétienne dans le dialogue avec les messages sociaux des autres Eglises et les traditions libératrices des autres religions asiatiques, en nous concentrant sur les expériences des victimes de la crise;

- de proposer des moyens qui nous permettent d'agir contre les structures de ce mal social.

5 - Au début de nos délibérations nous avons été encouragés par les paroles de l'évêque auxiliaire de l'archidiocèse de Séoul, Mgr Peter U-II Kang, à la messe d'ouverture. Il a parlé de la vie dans les bâtiments qui dépendent de la cathédrale, là où chaque jour il y a des manifestations de gens qui sont subitement devenus chômeurs, et n'ont aucune alternative. Il a cité les paroles du pape Jean-Paul II dans "*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*": "*Il faut dénoncer l'existence de mécanismes économiques, financiers et sociaux qui, bien que manipulés par des gens, fonctionnent souvent presque automatiquement, accentuant ainsi la richesse de quelques-uns et la pauvreté des autres*" (n.16).

Voir la crise à travers les yeux des victimes

6 - Au début de notre forum nous avons cherché à situer nos discussions dans la réalité vécue par les victimes de cette crise économique. Par petits groupes nous avons rendu visite :

- à des groupes de travailleurs faisant face à des licenciements sans compensation ou prime de départ;

- à un abri financé par l'Eglise presbytérienne de Corée pour les travailleurs migrants au chômage, dont la plupart seront expulsés, alors que

le reste espère une reprise économique;

- à la confédération des syndicats coréens (KCTU), et à un centre pour travailleuses au chômage qui propose des conseils, des informations, des soins et d'autres aides.

- à des squatts de pauvres urbains qui habitent dans des logements de fortune, sans adresses, situés sur des terrains en friche aux environs de la ville;

- à des sans-abri en colère et désespérés autour de la gare de Séoul, et dans un parc public, qui sont aidés par des anglicans, des bouddhistes et d'autres oeuvres caritatives.

7 - Cette expérience de rencontre avec les victimes de la crise asiatique nous a aidés à comprendre ses conséquences humaines et à les regarder à la lumière de la réalité pratique.

Analyse des structures de la politique économique globale et de son impact sur l'Asie

8 - Nous avons remarqué qu'alors que la crise économique entrainait dans sa deuxième année, les économies qui ont souffert n'ont pas encore touché le fond. Comme l'Amérique latine et l'Afrique dans les années 80, l'Asie de l'Est fait face à une débacle qui pourrait durer une décennie, sinon plus. En outre, la menace de la dépréciation des monnaies, qui a d'abord touché certains pays, s'est étendue à un plus grand nombre dans la région.

9 - La crise actuelle doit être analysée dans le contexte de la globalisation de l'économie de type néo-libéral pratiquée maintenant. Les mécanismes clés de cette globalisation sont négociés par une coalition d'intérêts internes et externes (politiques, institutions financières, leaders de groupes industriels, intellectuels) issue de pays développés ou en voie de développement, avec presque aucune participation de la société civile, y compris des Organisations non gouvernementales.

10 - Nous comprenons qu'il y a eu des facteurs internes contribuant à la crise, sous forme d'investissements excessifs dans l'immobilier et dans les actions en bourse, des systèmes bancaires faibles, de mauvaises politiques gouvernementales, du clientélisme, etc. Il est important, cependant, d'analyser ces facteurs dans le contexte de la dérégulation financière qu'entreprendent les économies asiatiques dans les années précédentes. Le FMI (Fonds monétaire international), la

Banque mondiale et les gouvernements du G-7 (des principaux pays industrialisés) ont constamment poussé les autorités financières asiatiques à libéraliser leurs comptes de capitaux et à ouvrir leur secteur financier encore plus à la participation étrangère. Il y avait peu de régulations sur les mouvements de capitaux dans les pays qui acceptèrent l'idéologie néo-libérale du FMI, et peu d'expérience précédente de gestion de tels afflux massifs de capitaux. Ainsi les capitaux étrangers n'allèrent pas au secteur productif de l'économie (comme l'agriculture et l'industrie) mais à la Bourse, au financement de la consommation et, tout particulièrement, à l'investissement immobilier. La même libéralisation des comptes de capitaux qui facilita des afflux massifs de capitaux, n'avait pas de mécanismes pour ralentir le départ de ces fonds quand les banques et les investisseurs décidèrent de les rappeler. La même dérégulation du marché permit aux spéculateurs sur les monnaies de faire des profits sur les retraits des investisseurs nationaux et étrangers, de spéculer sur les monnaies locales et ainsi d'aggraver les fuites de capitaux.

11 - La globalisation financière a sérieusement affecté le rôle de l'Etat-nation, puisque la souveraineté du contrôle et de la régulation est transférée à des organismes inter-gouvernementaux. En même temps, il est demandé à l'Etat de la transparence et d'être politiquement responsable.

12 - Le FMI est un des organismes qui a incité à la libéralisation des comptes de capitaux dans les économies asiatiques. Dans ses programmes de stabilisation à l'usage des pays touchés par la crise, le FMI continue à pousser à la totale libéralisation financière, ignorant l'évidence que ce sont les mouvements incontrôlés de capitaux qui ont provoqué la crise. Les effets de cette crise ont été aggravés par les programmes du FMI, conduisant à des récessions catastrophiques dans les économies de Corée, de l'Indonésie et de Thaïlande. Mesurés en terme de baisse de production, banqueroutes de banques et de compagnies, les coûts sont énormes. Mesurés en termes de chômage, de millions de personnes passant sous le seuil de pauvreté, les coûts sont encore plus terribles. Même ceux qui ne sont pas d'accord avec tous les aspects de notre analyse doivent accepter les impératifs moraux qui naissent des effets dévastateurs de cette crise.

13 - La société civile naissante dans ces économies profondément affectées d'Asie commence à exercer son rôle en collaboration avec plusieurs réseaux d'ONG de types divers. Elles essayent de comprendre la crise, de répondre aux besoins les plus immédiats des victimes et de proposer des alternatives à différents niveaux où

se rencontrent la politique et l'économie.

14 - Nous avons aussi noté l'impact de la crise, et de la restructuration menée par le FMI, sur les secteurs les plus vulnérables de la société - le secteur rural (les fermiers, les pêcheurs, etc), les travailleurs indépendants, les travailleurs à contrats temporaires, les vendeurs ambulants, etc..., l'environnement (l'érosion, la pollution des rivières, des forêts, des marais, etc). De plus, la crise a appauvri davantage la population les plus pauvres de la région, mais elle a aussi créé de nouveaux pauvres dans les rangs de la classe moyenne.

15 - La crise a révélé que les femmes d'Asie sont plus gravement affectées à cause de leur position inégale dans la société et de leur rôle très circonscrit. Les femmes sont les premières à être licenciées et ont moins accès aux mesures d'aide, telles que le crédit et les aides aux chômeurs. La crise occasionne une féminisation accrue de la pauvreté, du chômage et des migrations, ainsi qu'une aggravation des mauvais traitements et de l'instrumentalisation des femmes. Si avant la crise, les femmes pauvres étaient les plus touchées par la discrimination, avec la crise du FMI, les femmes des classes moyennes commencent à ressentir aussi une discrimination. (Nous estimons que les femmes, le secteur rural et le secteur des petits emplois sont des ressources pour répondre à la crise et y survivre et que leur contribution doit être reconnue).

16 - La crise actuelle a annulé les réductions de pauvreté qui étaient en cours pour beaucoup de gens dans la région. Les aspirations à améliorer leur qualité de vie ont tourné au cauchemar de l'insécurité de l'emploi et de la subsistance, à la perte de leurs maisons, etc. Un avenir de pouvoir politique, d'affirmation culturelle ayant pour base un pouvoir économique grandissant, ont été remplacés par la honte et l'incertitude, et par la peur d'un nouveau colonialisme. Ce n'est pas un avenir acceptable.

17 - Au forum de Séoul nous avons évalué l'impact du programme du FMI sur la situation des différents pays, c'est à dire l'Indonésie, la Corée du Sud et la Thaïlande. Nous avons aussi eu l'occasion de comparer l'expérience du Mexique qui a connu des processus d'ajustements structurels depuis dix-sept ans.

18 - Les mesures, y compris les emprunts à des organismes supranationaux, ont eu, pour l'Indonésie, la Corée du Sud et la Thaïlande, des effets dévastateurs à tous les niveaux, particulièrement sur les pauvres, et ont donné le contrôle aux marchés globaux qui sont dominés par des multinationales géantes.

19 - Nous avons entendu des exposés montrant les

effets de la crise dans ces trois pays et nous avons remarqué que les situations étaient, dans l'ensemble, similaires, sauf qu'en Indonésie la mise en oeuvre des mesures prescrites par le FMI devinrent l'occasion de troubles sociaux et politiques dirigés contre le régime autoritaire de Suharto.

20 - La leçon que nous avons pu retirer de l'expérience du Mexique est qu'après une aussi longue période d'ajustements structurels, alors que le PIB s'est amélioré depuis deux ans, les salaires des travailleurs ont perdu de leur pouvoir d'achat, et le nombre de ceux qui sont en dessous du seuil de pauvreté a augmenté de moitié, jusqu'à constituer les deux tiers de la population.

La crise parmi les travailleurs et les pauvres - Ateliers thématiques

21 - Après ces présentations il y eut un certain nombre d'ateliers de réflexion pour considérer les effets de la crise sur certains groupes et dans des domaines spécifiques, notamment les fermiers, les pêcheurs, l'environnement, les pauvres des villes et les travailleurs, surtout les migrants et les femmes. D'autre part, les ateliers considèrent la réponse de l'Eglise au niveau diocésain et de la paroisse, par les commissions "Justice et paix", par le renouveau et la restructuration de l'Eglise et dans le dialogue oecuménique et interreligieux.

22 - Au cours de ces discussions, nous avons remarqué qu'il y avait eu des déclarations significatives de quelques conférences d'évêques en réponse à la crise, mais qu'il reste encore beaucoup à faire par les commissions Justice et paix et à tous les niveaux de l'Eglise. Celle-ci a un rôle prophétique pour exprimer la solidarité avec le peuple dans sa recherche de solutions alternatives et pour répondre aux besoins humains des gens qui sont dans cette crise. Nous avons trouvé qu'il y a un appel clair pour que les priorités pastorales de l'Eglise passent d'un cléricalisme patriarcal aux besoins actuels des laïcs et à une ouverture vers une plus grande coopération interreligieuse. En outre, l'Eglise est appelée à agir pour la protection des droits des travailleurs et pour les aider à s'organiser.

En discernant les signes des temps - Kairos

23 - Conscients de la riche tradition de réflexion éthique, particulièrement des enseignements sociaux, de l'Eglise catholique, nous attendons le développement de ces enseignements à tous les niveaux de l'Eglise pour que soit prise en compte la nouvelle situation de globalisation de l'économie. Cette évolution devrait

prendre racine dans les expériences pratiques des Eglises locales, devrait prendre en compte la perspective laïque et intégrer les expériences vécues des chrétiens.

24 - Nous voyons qu'à l'avenir le développement des enseignements sociaux catholiques devra mettre plus l'accent sur la valeur de la solidarité qui maintenant a une perspective globale. Il devra aussi renforcer la compréhension du droit de tous à la propriété, un droit qui doit être reconnu et devenir effectif si les gens, individuellement ou dans des communautés locales, doivent atteindre un degré d'indépendance proportionné à leur dignité. Ce droit est depuis longtemps reconnu par l'Eglise, qui dénie, à tout individu ou corps constitué, le droit de propriété qui exclut les autres de toute possibilité d'accéder, même à un niveau modeste, à la propriété. Les enseignements de l'Eglise devraient développer cette vision en se référant à l'expansion continue du contrôle économique des multinationales, des traités internationaux, tels que l'Accord multilatéral sur les investissements (AMI) qui est en cours de négociation dans l'OCDE (Organisation pour la coopération économique et le développement), et aux pratiques courantes de prises de brevet sur les savoirs traditionnels des peuples indigènes et des ressources bio-génétiques.

25 - La globalisation est un défi à la morale mais aussi à la théologie. La crise actuelle en Asie est pour nous un temps de conversion, de vérité, et de grâce (*kairos*) :

- Un temps pour discerner dans la lumière de la foi biblique de l'Exode et de la bonne parole de Jésus. Quels sont les enjeux?

- Un temps pour être convertis en nous demandant: quels sont nos styles de vie et nos modèles de développement?

- Un temps pour dénoncer: avons-nous joué notre rôle de chrétiens et dénoncé les idoles - l'argent, le marché considéré comme un absolu, etc.?

- Un temps pour dire: avons-nous donné l'exemple d'un nouveau monde basé sur la solidarité en présentant des alternatives au présent?

- Un temps pour reconnaître et accueillir l'Esprit de Dieu spécialement présent dans les pauvres, les femmes, et les cultures et religions d'Asie.

26 - Cette *kairos* de la crise asiatique nous est révélée à la lumière de l'année du Grand Jubilé, l'an 2000, qui nous invite à rendre de nouveau vivantes les forces

des enseignements et de la vie du Christ pour critiquer le présent et construire un nouvel avenir.

27 - Pour vivre cette *kairos* nous avons besoin d'une nouvelle spiritualité communautaire et personnelle. L'Eglise s'efforce de vivre une spiritualité de désencombrement de soi (*kenosis*) et de service suivant le modèle de son maître, le Crucifié, tout en étant consciente de ses fréquents échecs par ses alliances avec les pouvoirs en place et le triomphalisme. Elle apprend à entrer en dialogue avec les pauvres du monde (spécialement ceux de l'Asie) et avec les cultures des peuples asiatiques, avec un respect profond. Elle enlève ses chaussures humblement devant les autres religions parce qu'elle reconnaît la présence et l'action de Dieu en elles. Les participants du forum de Séoul n'ont pas d'autre approche que celle qui est offerte par ce triple dialogue. Ils écoutent la voix de l'Esprit qui provient du buisson ardent de l'Asie, de ses luttes, de ses angoisses, de sa douleur, de son espérance (spécialement celle de ceux qui n'ont aucun pouvoir et sont exclus). Ils y discernent leur engagement actif dans la solidarité avec les peuples de religions différentes, mais de bonne volonté pour le service de tous dans l'amour. C'est dans cet esprit de fidélité créatrice au Dieu de vie et de justice tel qu'Il s'est révélé en Jésus-Christ, et dans l'engagement vis-à-vis de notre peuple que nous avons réfléchi à la crise actuelle en Asie.

28 - Nous devrions adopter la ligne de conduite "d'être plus" plutôt que celle "d'avoir plus"

Un programme d'actions de solidarité

29 - Compte tenu de la crise économique asiatique, il faut une restructuration fondamentale des Institutions financières internationales. Les propositions ci-dessous ne sont pas exhaustives, elles ne représentent pas non plus un programme systématique de réformes, ce sont des actions concrètes que nous pouvons entreprendre immédiatement.

a - Nous prenons la résolution d'engager et de soutenir des campagnes contre les initiatives du FMI pour qu'il modifie sa politique de soutien à la libéralisation complète des comptes de capitaux. Il s'agit d'une action irresponsable de la part du FMI.

b - Nous prenons la décision d'engager et de soutenir des campagnes contre les autres accords multilatéraux, régionaux, et bilatéraux existants (tels que l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC), l'AMI, l'interdiction du contrôle des capitaux de l'Organisation nord-américaine de li-

bre échange (NAFTA) etc., qui visent à libéraliser davantage les flux de capitaux sans les réglementations et obligations appropriées vis-à-vis des investisseurs. Le contrôle sur les transactions de capitaux doivent être maintenus.

c - Nous sommes décidés à soutenir la mesure qui consiste à faire payer aux bailleurs de fonds et aux investisseurs leur part des coûts. Quand une crise survient et qu'un renflouement intervient, dans la phase de récupération d'emprunts étrangers impossibles à honorer, les gouvernements ne devraient pas en garantir le remboursement. Cela constitue un injuste fardeau pour les contribuables, spécialement pour les pauvres, alors que cela protège les intérêts de banques étrangères irresponsables et de leurs débiteurs.

d - Nous sommes décidés à soutenir les mesures qui aboutiront à l'effacement de la dette extérieure pour les pays à faibles revenus. La santé, l'éducation et d'autres nécessités de base de certains des peuples les plus pauvres du monde sont compromis pour que les gouvernements puissent effectuer des paiements sur une dette qui ne peut jamais être remboursée. La campagne du Jubilé 2000 (qui est une campagne de pétition internationale appelant à la suppression de la dette extérieure des pays les plus pauvres) appelle aussi à prendre des mesures pour éviter la réapparition de ce genre de dette à l'avenir.

e - Nous décidons de soutenir les mesures consistant à abandonner le Programme d'ajustement structurel (SAP). Nous soutenons par exemple le schéma africain alternatif pour la transformation socio-économique et d'autres initiatives similaires en Asie, en Amérique latine et aux Antilles.

f - Nous sommes décidés à soutenir des programmes de rétablissement économique qui veulent agir immédiatement pour proposer et mettre en place des filets de sécurité sociaux pour les plus touchés par la crise. Ces plans devraient se concentrer particulièrement sur les secteurs les plus vulnérables de la société tels que les femmes, les enfants, les travailleurs indépendants, les populations rurales et indigènes, la nouvelle classe moyenne urbaine menacée par la pauvreté, etc. Des représentants de ces groupes doivent participer au développement de ces programmes.

g - Nous sommes décidés à soutenir des mesures de bons gouvernement, ayant des références

correctes aux droits de l'homme qui nécessitent la transparence et la responsabilité, de la part des gouvernements et des institutions internationales.

h - Nous sommes décidés à établir des liens de réseaux avec des ONG telles que Réseau-Tiers monde, "Consumers International", Eurodad, la Coalition pour le Jubilé 2000, *Foodfirst*, FIAN, la Fondation internationale pour le progrès rural, *Bankwatch*, "Cinquante ans, c'est assez" et d'autres organisations pour partager des idées et collaborer à des campagnes et à du lobbying.

i - Nous sommes décidés à soutenir les efforts pour contrôler les transferts de capitaux spéculatifs à court terme grâce à des mesures telles que la proposition de taxe Tobin, taxe sur les transferts financiers internationaux.

Un programme de renouvellement de l'Eglise

30 - En constatant les profondes souffrances des victimes des pratiques économiques qui causèrent la crise actuelle en Asie, il est important pour l'Eglise d'Asie, en solidarité avec l'Eglise universelle, de s'engager à répondre aux divers défis, en commençant par notre propre changement, basé sur une vision critique de notre attitude, de notre mentalité et de nos valeurs.

a - Nous incitons les Eglises d'Asie à examiner leurs structures et leur orientation pastorale dans le contexte de cette crise économique. Nous pensons que la participation des laïcs devrait être effective à tous les niveaux, y compris à celui des prises de décisions; qu'il devrait y avoir moins d'importance donnée à l'administration et plus aux préoccupations pastorales; et que, dans certains pays, il devrait y avoir un investissement moindre dans l'immobilier et un investissement plus grand dans les gens et dans leurs besoins.

b - Nous incitons les Eglises d'Asie à jouer un rôle de contrôle, de protection et de promotion des droits de l'homme pour ceux qui sont affectés par la crise économique asiatique, en particulier ceux qui ont perdu leur emploi et les sans-abri, en les aidant à organiser la protection et l'amélioration de leurs droits et leur dignité.

c - Nous demandons aux Eglises du monde industrialisé d'être solidaires des Eglises d'Asie. Dans ce contexte nous sommes en accord avec

le message final du Synode des Eglises d'Asie qui disait: *“Nous appelons les différentes Eglises du monde industrialisé à être solidaires avec les pauvres d'Asie, à se faire leurs avocats auprès de leurs propres gouvernements et auprès des institutions économiques mondiales telles que la Banque Mondiale et le FMI et l'Organisation mondiale du Commerce, pour arriver à ce que le pape Jean-Paul II a appelé cette année dans son message pour la journée mondiale de la paix: “La globalisation sans la marginalisation. La globalisation dans la solidarité”.*

d - Nous demandons au Conseil pontifical pour la justice et la paix de développer des positions personnelles, dans toutes ses activités et particulièrement en préparant ses rencontres avec le FMI et la Banque mondiale en vue de discussions sur la dette extérieure des pays pauvres, ceci après avoir dialogué avec les ONG et les gens de terrain qui travaillent sur la question de la dette et dialoguent avec les personnes en difficulté.

e - Nous demandons à la Fédération de la Conférence des évêques d'Asie (FABC) d'envoyer une délégation au FMI et à la Banque mondiale pour discuter l'impact de leur politique sur les peuples d'Asie, spécialement sur les pauvres, leur demandant de réviser la nature de leurs interventions et de changer les conditions qu'ils imposent. Nous demandons à la FCEA d'inviter les autres leaders religieux à se joindre à eux dans ce dialogue avec les institutions financières internationales.

f - Nous demandons à la FABC et à tous les groupes catholiques laïcs, organisations et mouvements de promouvoir la campagne pour le Jubilé 2000 à travers l'Eglise d'Asie.

g - 1- Nous demandons aux conférences épiscopales nationales d'Asie de préparer des lettres pastorales ou d'autres réponses à la crise économique asiatique et aux injustices qui en découlent, dans la lumière des enseignements sociaux catholiques et dans le dialogue avec les victimes. Les laïcs, spécialement les femmes et les ONG concernées devraient être représentées dans le processus d'élaboration de ces documents. Ce principe de consultation ouverte devrait être appliqué à la formulation de la politique et des documents de l'Eglise à tous les niveaux.

2- Nous demandons aux conférences épiscopales d'Asie d'établir une commission pour les femmes, comme il y en a pour le travail, la justice et la paix, etc. Les femmes, à cause des souffrances dues à la crise économique, aggravées par la discrimination qui les frappe, ont besoin d'un canal officiel pour exprimer leurs besoins et pour participer au dialogue sur l'amélioration de la situation.

h - C'est pourquoi nous demandons que la conscience des injustices socio-économiques et les stratégies pour y remédier deviennent et demeurent une part importante des préparations et des célébrations de l'an 2000 pour le Grand Jubilé, aussi bien au niveau de l'Eglise universelle qu'au niveau des Eglises locales.

Ref.: *Dossiers et documents* n. 9/98. Supplément EDA n. 275, Novembre 1998, Document n. 9 E/98

Pete Henriot, SJ (Lusaka, Zambia)

Adjusting in Africa: For Whose Benefit?

*"Towards a Global Ethic" — Trocaire Conference,
Dublin, 30 October 1998*

I come to this conference immediately influenced by several factors. First, I am less than two weeks out of Zambia, where I have lived and worked for the past 10 years. Zambia is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 146th out of 174 nations in the 1998 UNDP Human Development Index. Second, I have just been in my country of origin, the United States, experiencing again the cultural shock of the lifestyle of one of the richest nations in the world, leader and model of the globalising forces we are speaking about here. Third, I was last week participating in an international conference on the "Ethical Dimensions of External Debt", listening to the likes of James Wolfensohn of the World Bank, Michel Camdessus of the IMF, and Diarmuid Martin of the Vatican. (I will be quick to acknowledge that I found myself much more impressed by the ethical analysis and commitment of Monsignor Martin than by that of Mssrs. Wolfensohn and Camdessus!). And fourth, I am presently thinking about an appropriate celebration back in Zambia of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, coming up in December.

Now, these four factors influence my presentation here this morning at this Trocaire Conference on "Global Ethics" as I speak about "Adjusting in Africa: For Whose Benefit?". As a non-African, I can only offer a perspective, an analysis based on my personal experience and the studies I and others have done, without presuming to offer an authentic, indigenous perspective such as would come from an African. I want briefly to address three points:

1. The situation of Africa as it undergoes "adjustment" to fit into the globalised marketplace.
2. The areas of ethical concern that are raised when we ask: who is benefiting from this adjustment?
3. The possible alternatives and paths of hope that can be offered under the influence of global eth-

ics shaped by Catholic social teaching.

1. Africa adjusting

To accurately speak about Africa and globalisation, we must admit that this is the fourth stage of the global impact of external forces on the continent. The first phase was that of the slave trade, when European, American and Arab traders stole Africa's most precious resource, its women, men and children, for the benefit of economic progress outside of Africa. The second stage was colonialism, when Africa was divided up geographically, dominated politically, exploited economically, and damaged culturally, all for the benefit of outsiders, some of whom lived on the continent. The third stage, called "neocolonialism" by Pope Paul VI in his great 1976 social Encyclical *Populorum progressio*, ("On the Development of Peoples"), was marked by structures of an international economic order (trade, investments, aid and loans, technology, etc.) and a geo-political order (Cold War manipulations) that primarily benefited the so-called developed countries. We are now in the midst of the fourth stage, a globalisation driven by a neoliberal economic ideology and a communications technology that integrates financial, information and cultural orientations on the continent that again are primarily for the benefit of outsiders.

What has been the consequence of this new globalisation for Africa? Both the UNCTAD *Trade and Development Report* of 1997 and the UNDP *Human Development Report* of 1997 indicated that unguided globalisation has indeed contributed to increasing inequality between and within countries. While some global figures would show some improvements in Africa recently, when dis-aggregated these figures reveal that the economic well-being of the majority of sub-Saharan African States has either stagnated or is in decline. Rising rates of GDP growth in some parts of Africa are precariously fragile and benefits unevenly distributed.

◆ Of the 44 least developed countries in the UNDP ranking, 33 are in Africa. Zambia, for instance, has slipped from 136th place out of 174 in 1996, to 142nd in 1997, to 146th in 1998.

◆ The external debt of sub-Saharan African countries now stands at US\$ 235 billion, with more money going out of Africa through debt servicing than is available to meet basic needs of health, education, food, water, sanitation, etc.

◆ Foreign aid has fallen off dramatically in recent years, currently down by one-fourth in real terms in 1997 from 1990.

◆ Direct foreign investment has been up, but primarily has come only to a few countries, such as the Republic of South Africa, and oil producers such as Nigeria and Angola.

Today in some circles it is popular to speak of an “African Renaissance”, in political as well as economic terms. I am afraid that I will not be one to use that term in our discussions here.

2. Ethics of Africa’s adjusting

In order to fit into the globalisation process, Africa must “adjust” its economy. (I’m afraid that this means primarily that the African people must “adjust” their belts!). This adjustment occurs in three major areas: a) economic reform according to a neo-liberal model (Structural Adjustment Programmes), b) involvement in liberalised trade according to terms of the WTO, and c) service of a huge external debt. Each of these areas raises major ethical concerns around the question: to whose benefit?

a) *Structural Adjustment Programmes:*

There is no question that African economies have had in recent years to make major structural changes in order to be both more efficient and more equitable. Collapse of industrial and agricultural capacities, decline of social services and physical infrastructures, drying up of outside investments: all these have been signs of the need to move away from over-centralised command economies, inefficient and sometimes corrupt management, ineffective and often inequitable subsidy schemes, etc.

But to speak simply from the country I know best, Zambia, this needed economic reform was pushed forward with un-needed haste, ideological rigidity, and social insensitivity. The SAP model — designed, proposed and indeed imposed by the International Mon-

etary Fund and World Bank — was challenged in 1988 by an “African Alternative Framework for Structural Adjustment Programme” put forward by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. ECA’s central challenge — valid then and valid today — is that SAP is a short-term fiscal management programme and not a long-term economic development programme. As implemented throughout Africa, it has been a shock treatment of austere measures, bringing under control some economic indicators such as inflation and budget deficits, but causing dramatic declines in social indicators such as education and health measurements.

The recently completed external review of the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) programme of the IMF has similarly revealed that economic reforms in Africa have lacked appropriate timing and phasing, adequate flexibility, and sufficient attention to social consequences. In a country like Zambia, ESAF is not working for the majority of people, as we experience massive retrenchments in the formal sector of employment, drastic declines in school enrolments, disturbing rises in mortality and morbidity rates, etc.

Zambians are told SAP is necessary if we are to enter into the globalised economy. While there may well be *pain* in the short-run, our government and the IFIs tell us, there will be *gain* in the long-run. But Lord Keynes’ oft-cited remark that “In the long-run we will all be dead!” could have no truer application than in a country like Zambia. For here the life expectancy has fallen from 54 years a decade ago to 44 years today — the consequence of severe poverty exacerbated by austere economic reforms!

Again and again, Zambians are asking — especially women and children, the most vulnerable, *who is supposed to benefit from all this SAP?* It is certainly not the majority of Zambians, the 70 per cent of the population that the World Bank says live below a line of absolute poverty. Our ethical concern prods us to ask: what country in Africa *has* benefited from the neo-liberal model imposed by the need to enter into a globalised economy? If anyone in this audience could answer that question I would be happy to bring the information back to my friends in Zambia.

Two basic principles of Catholic social teaching are promotion of the common good and the preferential option for the poor. I submit that an ethical analysis of the SAP regimes imposed on Africa indicate clear violations of these principles.

b) *Free trade regime:*

I am sure that this audience is not unaware of the critiques that have been offered to the consequences of the Uruguay Round of negotiations that have brought a fully liberalised trade regime. The primary critique is that the benefits are distributed very unfairly. On Tuesday of this week, one *Zambian newspaper* (a benefit of technological globalisation — I can read the daily papers from Lusaka on the Internet!) headlined an article, “Africa Hasn’t Benefited from Global Liberalisation”. The article repeated figures frequently offered to assert that while Europe will accrue an US\$ 80 billion gain from the liberalised regime, China US\$ 40 billion, Japan US\$ 25 billion and the United States US\$ 18 billion, Africa as a whole would in effect experience a US\$ 3 billion *loss*.

Indeed, Africa would not substantially benefit from the free trade regime but would face a loss of some of the very instruments that had been integral parts of the East Asian development strategies — strategies so often held up as models for Africa to follow. This point is made in the just-released 1998 UNCTAD report (pp. 220-221) that notes that the multilateral trade disciplines introduced by the WTO regime “prohibit the use of some key policy tools to promote exports and protect infant industries” and have “reduced the scope for using measures such as trade-related subsidies and imposing conditions on FDI, and for practices such as lax enforcement of intellectual property rights...”. The WTO regime pushes a liberalisation model that reduces the scope of African countries to follow a vigorous infant industry protection and export subsidies.

A central feature in the global liberalisation approach is the United States proposed legislation for the “Africa Growth and Opportunity Act”, a major trade and investment bill now before the Congress. (It parallels the NAFTA arrangements between the United States and its neighbours). While I was in Washington DC earlier this week, I heard many objections voiced by African solidarity groups that the bill stands to benefit US corporate interests rather than the majority of Africa’s poor people. It lays out eligibility requirements for African countries to trade with the US by imposing harsh adjustments on their economies similar to the SAP conditionalities of the World Bank and the IMF. The Africa Faith and Justice Network in Washington DC notes that this SAP approach to economic reform has already caused significant harm to the poor. The Act, “represents a ‘trickle down’ model that would grant foreign investors unrestricted access to Africa’s natural resources and set the stage

for exploiting its workers. The bill contains no binding debt relief provisions, labor protections or environmental standards”. (*Around Africa*, June 1998) It is easy to see why President Clinton had to stand by in embarrassed silence earlier this year in South Africa while President Mandela spoke critically of this Act.

Another example of the instruments of the liberalised trade regime that raise considerable ethical concern is the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). Battered down earlier this year by a strong international mobilisation of NGOs, the MAI proposal is surfacing again, with the proposal last week to shift negotiations from the OECD to the WTO. Espoused by its backers as promoting “a level playing field for foreign investment worldwide”, the MAI, if implemented in Africa, would deprive governments of the ability to effectively regulate transnational corporation activities within their countries, guarantee social and environmental protections for its citizens, and have a strong say in shaping their own development model and priorities.

Again, to point to the ethical principles offered in Catholic social teaching, the solidarity of nations and people and the designing of an economy that puts people first is central to any effective global ethics. I submit that the liberalised trade regime currently being pursued under the guidance of the WTO does not promote these ethical principles, but, on the contrary, continues to distort the benefits, priorities and future directions of global relationships more and more in favour of the rich and powerful of the world.

c) *Debt servicing*

Much has been said, and will continue to be said, about the immense international debt burden of the poor countries of the world, especially the countries on the African continent. Here I want only to repeat two lessons that became more clear to me last week during the international debt conference I participated in in the United States. While I already knew these lessons, they became even more clear in the exchange between Wolfensohn, Camdessus and others during that conference.

First, the debt problem around the world is primarily a *political* problem. True, it is an economic problem, with economic roots and economic solutions. But it is primarily a political problem because it can be solved through the political will to establish effective, equitable and sustainable debt relief for the poorest countries. Such relief has, for political reasons,

been given historically to Germany after World War II, to Poland after the fall of the Soviet Empire, to Egypt after the Middle East settlements. Sufficient resources have been found, and are being found today, to bail out collapsed economies in Asia. Why no such generous assistance to the heavily indebted poor countries, especially those of Africa?

Second, the exit to the debt problem that will be most desirable in terms both of efficiency and equity is *Jubilee* and not HIPC. Let me only briefly explain, since adequate treatment of this topic requires development at much greater length. Today debt servicing is a major block to development in Africa. Development requires economic growth which requires growth in social capital — educated, healthy and committed people. But debt servicing drains scarce resources away from investments in the social sectors of education and health. This is true in Zambia (where this year's budget allocates more for servicing our immense debt of US\$ 7.1 billion than for all education and health programmes combined) and throughout Africa.

To demonstrate that, I cite the following quote from the World Bank's report on *Taking Action for Poverty Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa* (1996):

"...on average debt service payments as a ratio to GDP are about 5%. Compare this with the average public expenditure by countries in sub-Saharan Africa on health as a percentage of GDP, namely 2.5%, and the burden of debt service payments on the provision of social services becomes starkly obvious" (p. 45).

The World Bank and the IMF, acknowledging both the unpayable character and the social consequences of the debt overhang, began in 1996 its "Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative" (HIPC) to reach what its proponents called an "exit" to the debt problem by establishing "sustainable" levels of debt servicing. While HIPC might provide some level of debt relief for some nations, it is sharply criticised for five reasons:

1. *it is too little* — only a portion of debt is struck off the books, and huge debt servicing remains (e.g., Mozambique annual debt service will fall from \$113 million before HIPC to only US\$ 100 million).
2. *it is too late* — countries become eligible only after several years, mostly beyond the year 2000.
3. *it is too limited* — 41 countries are declared

"eligible" for consideration, but many more poor countries deeply in debt are excluded.

4. *it is too rigid* — eligibility depends upon strict adherence to structural adjustment reforms, which by and large are discredited (even in the latest *official* ESAF reviews) as inadequate, unsustainable and inequitable paths to integral human development.

5. *it is too unrealistic* — debt sustainability is measured primarily in terms of arbitrary levels of debt to revenues (to guarantee meeting debt servicing) without considering the realistic levels of available resources for social and productive priorities (to guarantee meeting basic human needs).

In brief, HIPC is a *creditor's* scheme to guarantee some debt servicing and not a *debtor's* scheme to restore the possibilities of integral development.

Therefore a much more radically effective approach to debt relief is necessary if there is to be integral development that includes poverty eradication: *outright cancellation of the unpayable debts of the poorest countries*. This is the campaign of the Jubilee 2000 effort, and here in Ireland you have a strong alliance of campaigners I urge you to join in this campaign! Let me simply emphasise that Jubilee 2000 presents the case very clearly and strongly for the more realistic approach for debt relief that will have direct consequences for creating capacities for poverty eradication. Cancellation of debts by itself will not bring integral development, but no integral development will come without cancellation.

Let me quote the clear statement three months ago of the Joint Ecumenical Pastoral Letter of the three major Church bodies of Zambia (Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical):

"Zambia's total debt is clearly unpayable. Zambia *cannot* pay back because the debt burden is economically exhausting. It blocks future development. Zambia *will not* pay back because the debt burden is politically destabilising. It threatens social harmony. Zambia *should not* pay back because the debt burden is ethically unacceptable. It hurts the poorest in our midst".

Among those of us guided by the principles of Catholic social teaching, the central ethical concern for debt relief is obvious. Community and solidarity, common good and option for the poor, all these principles cry out for debt relief in Africa. This would be

“adjustment” that would truly benefit the people!

3. Alternatives and hopes

Let me conclude my perspective on “Adjusting in Africa: For Whose Benefit?” by emphasising three alternatives to the current trends in the process of liberalised globalisation. These alternatives offer hopes of even now building that globalisation spoken of by John Paul II in his 1998 World Day of Peace statement, a “globalisation without marginalisation, a globalisation with solidarity”.

The first emphasis, and one that is most appropriate on this occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is the radical importance of *promoting human rights concerns* in economic decisions regarding reform, trade, investment, and financial policy in Africa. We must recall that the Human Rights Covenants include economic rights, a point reiterated by Pope John XXIII in his 1963 social Encyclical, *Pacem in terris*, (*Peace on Earth*). I was cheered to read that at the 50th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, meeting in Geneva in August 1989, a resolution was adopted on “The international Economic Order and the Promotion of Human Rights”. The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities will study ways by which the primacy of human rights norms and standards can be better reflected in the international and regional agreements and practices (such as WTO, SAP, etc.) and how UN human rights bodies and mechanisms can play a central role in this regard. The ascendancy of an unfettered “market” in a liberalised globalisation regime has undermined many human rights protections for workers, consumers, women, the environment. We must push the ethical mandate for human rights to govern globalisation!

My second emphasis is on the *activity of civil society* in promoting a more just economic order at global, national and local levels. This involves popular participation in good governance efforts. Here I can speak of the experience of Zambia, where we have a struggling but vital civil society composed of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community based organisations (CBOs), churches, etc. To refer specifically to the Churches, I work closely with our Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. Three projects are particularly interesting. First, training local justice and peace and development groups around the country, we have a “SAP Monitoring Project” that gathers information on the impact on the poor of the economic reforms (e.g., cost of living, health and edu-

cation access, retrenchments, etc.). Besides conscientising the local people for a deeper understanding of the economic situation, this information is used at the national and international levels for advocating more socially just policies. Second, relying on this information and other input from civil society as well as government sources, we are able to do a detailed budget analysis twice a year, during the preparation of the national budget and after it is presented to Parliament, to raise up the social and ethical dimensions for public debate. Third, we have a very active project focusing on Zambia’s debt, aimed at securing equitable and sustainable debt relief. Key to this is promotion of what I refer to as “social conditionality from below”: monitoring debt negotiations and allocation of income from debt relief, so that the social and productive sectors of society will benefit and Zambia will not fall again into heavy and unfruitful debt situations.

I conclude with my third emphasis, a *call for international solidarity*. In the face of the forces of a liberalised globalisation that does not put people first, we need increasing cooperation among individuals and groups who work for the integral and sustainable development of the entire human community. I want to tell you something you may already know. Returning to Africa, to Zambia, from a conference such as this gives me renewed insight and vigour. Yes, Trocaire means money for projects in Zambia, but it means much more in terms of the globalised compassion and commitment of Irish people that this conference so well demonstrates. I thank you for that!

Something that Justin Kilcullen said last week in the United States during the debt conference we both were participating in has stayed with me. At one moment when we church-types were possibly curbing our positions (or holding our tongues!) in order to stay civil and reach consensus with the representatives of the banking and government communities, Justin reminded us of the need to stay *prophetic* and, like Jesus in the temple (Jn 2: 13-17), become *angry* at the injustices and exploitations around us. Perhaps this conference, or my own presentation, has not been marked with anger. But it is there with me, believe me, in the reality of what I will return to in a few days in Zambia! To give the actual answer today to the question: “Adjusting in Africa: For Whose Benefit?” cannot help but stir anger. To give a different, alternative and ethical answer for tomorrow, cannot but stir hope. Please, be with me — let’s turn our anger into hope!

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Chine: Appel des Eglises Protestantes

Les principaux dirigeants des Eglises protestantes dites «domestiques» ont lancé un appel solennel au gouvernement pour que la persécution religieuse cesse

Dans un document sans précédent, daté du 22 août 1998, les principaux dirigeants de dix grandes Eglises protestantes dites «domestiques» lancent un appel solennel au gouvernement chinois et lui demandent de faire cesser la persécution dont elles sont les victimes. Le document a été préparé et publié dans la province du Henan qui est, depuis longtemps, le centre du mouvement des Eglises «domestiques» qui se multiplie aujourd'hui dans toutes les provinces de Chine.

Les Eglises dites «domestiques» refusent l'autorité du Mouvement des trois autonomies et du Conseil Chrétien de Chine qu'elles estiment être à la solde du Parti communiste chinois. N'étant donc pas officiellement enregistrées, ces Eglises, d'origine évangélique pour la plupart, organisent leurs rassemblements dans des maisons privées. Le Mouvement des trois autonomies est l'équivalent protestant de l'Association patriotique des catholiques chinois. Les Eglises «domestiques» protestantes sont depuis trois ans, avec l'Eglise catholique «clandestine», les cibles privilégiées de la répression religieuse du régime (EDA, 226, 235, 247, 271, par exemple. *Par ailleurs, la répression, en tous points semblable, qui continue de frapper les catholiques «clandestins» particulièrement dans la province du Hebei est abondamment documentée dans «Eglises d'Asie»*).

L'appel lancé par leurs principaux dirigeants demande l'abrogation des règlements religieux répressifs et la libération de tous les chrétiens détenus dans les camps de travail. Le document demande aussi aux autorités gouvernementales d'accepter la réalité: selon eux, en effet, les membres des Eglises «domestiques» sont huit fois plus nombreux que ceux qui acceptent la tutelle du Mouvement des trois autonomies. Ces derniers sont au nombre de dix millions selon les statistiques officielles. Même si les chiffres donnés par les dirigeants des Eglises «domestiques» sont artificiellement gonflés (*Un certain nombre d'organisations proches des milieux évangéliques estiment que les Eglises «domestiques» chinoises rassemblent 80 millions de fidèles. Ces chiffres n'ont jamais été confirmés de manière indépendante et les observateurs parlent d'une vingtaine de millions environ*), beaucoup d'observateurs estiment cependant que les chrétiens «domestiques» sont beaucoup plus nombreux que les chrétiens protestants «officiels».

Les Eglises «domestiques» signataires de l'appel sont nommées dans le document. On y trouve les Eglises charismatique, pentecôtiste, luthérienne et baptiste, en même temps que des groupes plus récents d'origine chinoise comme «Le petit troupeau» et les «Re-nés».

Le document demande encore au gouvernement de clarifier officiellement ce qu'il entend par «culte». Les autorités s'en prennent en effet souvent à des groupes évangéliques orthodoxes qui refusent de se faire enregistrer sous l'autorité du Mouvement des trois autonomies, sous prétexte qu'ils seraient extrémistes et dangereux pour

la société. Les dirigeants des Eglises «domestiques» demandent donc aux chefs du Parti communiste d'entrer en dialogue avec eux afin de rechercher la réconciliation et de diminuer la confrontation.

Cet appel solennel apparaît comme une initiative importante destinée à attirer l'attention internationale sur la sévère répression subie par les Eglises «domestiques» au cours de ces dernières années. Il manifeste aussi le degré de maturité atteint par le mouvement des Eglises «domestiques» qui couvre un large éventail d'options théologiques. Jusqu'à présent, et depuis de nombreuses années, les divisions et les querelles théologiques du mouvement l'avaient empêché de s'organiser face à la volonté répressive de l'Etat. Aujourd'hui, le mouvement des Eglises «domestiques» semble déterminé à acquérir une plus grande visibilité tant en Chine que sur la scène internationale afin de mieux se défendre contre la persécution.

Il faut noter aussi un certain changement d'attitude des dirigeants des Eglises «domestiques» en ce qui concerne le Mouvement des trois autonomies. Jusqu'à présent, ils étaient vigoureusement hostiles à l'Eglise reconnue par l'Etat. Le document qui vient de paraître semble prendre une attitude plus pragmatique. Tout en maintenant que *«les Eglises du Mouvement des trois autonomies sont coupables de déviations sérieuses en matière spirituelle»* et que le Mouvement des trois autonomies n'a aucun titre pour représenter les Eglises chrétiennes de Chine, les auteurs du document reconnaissent que les Eglises sous la tutelle du Mouvement des trois autonomies constituent une «confession chrétienne» et sont donc toutes, avec les Eglises «domestiques», *«membres du courant principal du christianisme chinois»*.

Il n'est pas sûr que ce début d'ouverture provoque une réaction positive de la part du gouvernement ou du Mouvement des trois autonomies. Depuis trois ans, les autorités ont intensifié une campagne pour obliger les Eglises «domestiques» à se faire enregistrer et à s'aligner derrière le Mouvement des trois autonomies. Celles qui refusent sont fermées de force. Il est possible que ce soit le désespoir qui ait amené les dirigeants des Eglises «domestiques» à rendre publique cette initiative audacieuse et sans précédent. En Chine même, les Eglises «domestiques» indépendantes ont le dos au mur, et, à l'étranger, certaines organisations évangéliques sont devenues de plus en plus favorables au Mouvement des trois autonomies. On peut estimer que la stratégie gouvernementale du Front uni, destinée à isoler les Eglises «domestiques» et à diviser les organisations évangéliques de l'étranger, a été un succès remarquable.

On peut espérer tout de même que les autorités chinoises écouteront cet appel des chrétiens «domestiques». En dépit des pressions qu'ils continuent de subir en Chine, leurs dirigeants manifestent une grande maturité dans leur réflexion chrétienne. Leur document se termine par une profession de foi: *«Le mouvement chinois des Eglises domestiques est le canal par lequel la bénédiction divine arrive en Chine. La persécution des enfants de Dieu observe ce canal de bénédictions. Nous espérons que le gouvernement répondra positivement à cette déclaration des Eglises domestiques»*.

COMING EVENTS

WORKING GROUPS

Wednesday, 20 January China Group 15:00 hrs at **SEDOS**

Tuesday, 2 February Mission in Conflict Situation 15:30 hrs at **SEDOS**

SEDOS AFTERNOON ACTIVITY

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