

## CONTENTS

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	210
<hr/>	
<b>JESUS WITH AN ASIAN FACE</b> Jacques Dupuis	211
<hr/>	
<b>JAPON: INCULTURATION DES VALEURS ÉVANGÉLIQUES DANS LES PAYS BOUDDHISTES</b> Jan Van Bragt, CICM	217
<hr/>	
<b>PARADIGMS FOR A FEMINIZATION OF THE CHURCH</b> John D'Mello	226
<hr/>	
<b>MAIN BASSE SUR LES TERRES INDIGÈNES</b> Serafina Ferreira de Alvarez	233
<hr/>	
<b>AFRICA'S STRUGGLE FOR SELF-DEFINITION DURING A TIME OF GLOBALIZATION</b> Laurenti Magesa	235
<hr/>	
<b>COMING EVENTS</b>	240

## Editorial

While the Churches in Asia are waiting for the Apostolic Exhortation which will put a seal to the synodal work, we are able to offer you a reflection of Fr JACQUES DUPUIS, SJ. He explains in his article how Asian Christologists have been working the last decades in order to present the mystery of Jesus Christ in the context of Asian reality, as the New Testament writers once elaborated a "progressive contextual presentation of the mystery of Christ". —

After over 35 years of missionary teaching in Japan, Fr JAN VAN BRAGT, CICM, looks closely at some cultural aspects of Buddhist societies in Asia. In his conclusions he shows us where the Church could learn from Buddhist culture and where a Buddhist society could be enriched by Christian values. —

Fr JOHN D'MELLO searches in his contribution for a possible male-female partnership in the Churches of Asia. He believes that the 'solidarity paradigm' is especially appropriate for Asia because it arises from Asian cultures and could enrich Church activities at many levels. —

SERAFINA FERREIRA DE ALVAREZ shows with the example of Paraguay how the Indigenous population is constantly victimised in the distributions of land, be it by the government itself or other civil organisations. —

In our last contribution, Fr LAURENTI MAGESA, a well known theologian and parish priest from Tanzania, looks at the effects of globalization in Africa. Against an evident lack of fair play as a constituent element of economic globalization, he pleads for a south which recaptures the ability to define itself out of its own experiences. —

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Jacques Dupuis

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## Jesus with an Asian Face

*“What is now growing in the Asian context can best be described as a Jesuology of liberation, thought out in the context of religious and cultural pluralism; or, better still, as a liberation Jesuology in inter-religious dialogue.... It fosters in fact an approach to the man Jesus, which Christian believers can develop in conjunction with those of other religious faiths, in a common effort to respond religiously to a concrete reality shared by all”.*

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Much has been heard during the Synod for Asian Bishops recently held in Rome about the pressing need for the Asian Churches to present themselves “with an Asian face”. This implied that the principle of inculturation must be applied to all aspects of the Church’s life, from the way of living one’s Christian faith down to the structures and the law of the Church. It applied especially to the need for developing a contextual Asian theology, and in the first instance to the way in which the mystery of Jesus Christ ought to be presented in the Asian context.

It is worth quoting what the Second Report by Cardinal Paul Shan Kuo-hsi of Taiwan had to say in this regard:

All the Synod Fathers agreed that there must be a new way of presenting Jesus Christ to the peoples of Asia. It is the person of Jesus Christ who needs to be presented and not doctrines about him.

There are many ways of presenting Jesus Christ which are intelligible to Asian peoples: Jesus Christ as the Teacher of true Wisdom, Jesus as the Way of the Spirit, Jesus as the Teacher of Truth, Jesus as the Spiritual Guide, Jesus as the Enlightened One, Jesus as the one who shares the kenosis of the Asian Peoples.

The presentation of Jesus Christ could come as the fulfilment of the yearnings expressed in the mythologies and folklore of the Asian peoples. This was done in the early Church. A gradual doctrinal catechesis about Jesus will then be able to give a sure foundation to the faith of believers (n. 15).

The recommendation for a contextualised presentation of Jesus Christ made by the Synod Fathers did not get lost in the official list of propositions sent to Pope John Paul II by the Synod. Proposition 6 reads as follows:

[I]n proclaiming Jesus Christ to the peoples of

Asia [the] richness of evangelization should be taken into account: Jesus Christ as the Teacher of Wisdom, the Healer, the Liberator, the Spiritual Guide, the Enlightened One, the Compassionate Friend of the poor, the Good Samaritan, the Good Shepherd, the Obedient One, etc. It must be kept in mind that such initial proclamation will be completed with a full catechesis on Jesus Christ as truly God and man.

It is permitted to presume that the Apostolic Exhortation which will put a seal to the synodal work will echo faithfully the further recommendation made by the Synod Fathers in their proposition 7, which states:

Encouragement is to be given by this Synod to theologians to pursue their work of developing an inculturated theology that responds to Asian realities. This theologising is to be carried out with courage, in faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Church’s tradition, and in sincere adherence to the Magisterium and with an awareness of pastoral realities.

This paper intends to show that a progressive contextual presentation of the mystery of Jesus Christ, starting with the discovery of the man Jesus during his earthly life and passing on gradually to the elaboration of the mystery of his person as it is proposed in the New Testament in the light of the paschal experience of the disciples, corresponds to the pedagogy which Jesus himself used to make himself progressively understood by his followers. The Church tradition has moreover followed the same pedagogy in the way she ascended from the meaning of what “Jesus is for us” to the comprehension of “who the Christ is in himself”. In the pedagogy of the Christian faith “Jesuology” must precede “Christology”. The paper goes on to show in a brief, schematic fashion that Asian Christologists have in the last decades been responding to the same dynamic of the Christian faith

in their efforts to present the mystery of Jesus Christ in the context of Asian reality. Hence the two parts of the paper.

Before entering into the heart of the subject, it may be useful to recall rapidly some efforts made in past generations to make the person of Jesus Christ meet with Asian realities, and to ask why such efforts met then with only a partial success.

Reviewing rapidly the century which is now fast coming to an end, we may say that the first significant encounter between Jesus Christ and Indian culture and religion is that which took place at the beginning of the century in the context of the meeting of Christianity and Hindu mysticism. I have developed elsewhere, though summarily, various models of Jesus to which this encounter led on the part of Hindu writers (Dupuis 1991:15-45; Thomas 1969, Samartha 1974). I distinguished the following models: the Jesus of the Beatitudes, the Christ of *Bhakti*, the Christ of neo-Vedantin philosophy, the Christ *avatara*, the *Yogi* Christ, the Christ of *Advaita* mysticism.

One will note that among all these models, with the exception of the Jesus model of the Beatitudes of Mahatma Gandhi, the discourse is directly Christological rather than Jesuological. The encounter between Hindu religionists and Christian believers went directly to a doctrinal, Hindu or Christian, interpretation of the person of Jesus Christ. The fact is that in the past generations the Christian presentations of Jesus Christ in India often consisted in building up Indian Christologies with little foundation in the concrete historical reality of Jesus, the man from Nazareth. What retained directly the attention was the doctrine of a divine person made man as the distinctive feature — and the greatest challenge — of the Christian faith to the other religious faiths prevalent in Asia which it encountered.

It would be easy to substantiate this observation with concrete examples, either in the Protestant or Catholic tradition. To refer only to the latter, come immediately to mind the celebrated names of B. Upadhyaya, P. Johanns, J. Monchanin, H. le Saux, B. Griffiths and many others whose main concern has been to develop a Christian *advaita* theology and mysticism in which the basic mysteries of Christianity would find their place, starting with the mystery of a Triune God in relation to the created world and of a divine person made man in history.

Such efforts have not been in vain. There is no denying that they still occupy an important place and continue to make a valuable contribution towards an

Indian, and an Asian presentation of the mystery of Jesus Christ. One may nevertheless ask whether their limited success and impact in the field of Christology is not to be attributed partly to the fact that they concerned themselves directly with transposing the doctrine of the God-man rather than with fostering a personal encounter with the man, Jesus of Nazareth. Did not such Christology, in some way, put the cart before the horse? A return to Jesuology was then in order, and is, as we shall suggest hereafter, the main concern of the ongoing Christian reflection on Jesus Christ in the Asian context.

This too is where the observation and the recommendation made by the recent Asian Synod has something important to tell us. The Synod affirmed in so many words that in the Asian set up to foster the discovery of the person of Jesus is more important than teaching doctrines about him, and must in any case come first in a context where experience is paramount in religious endeavour. It further suggests various directions along which a personal encounter with the man Jesus may be fostered in the context of the Asian reality, where the dehumanizing poverty of large masses of people runs parallel with the rich patrimony of ancient cultures and religious traditions. The call of the day is for an Asian, contextual and inculturated Jesuology.

## I. The Pedagogy of Jesus

The decisive role which the resurrection of Jesus and the Easter experience of the disciples occupied in the genesis of the Christological faith must be fully recognized. These events gave rise to a Christology and marked its point of departure. Before the Resurrection of Jesus, the disciples had not perceived the true significance of their master's person and work. They had, no doubt, some glimpses of his mystery, but without grasping the exact bearing of what Jesus had declared to them. It could be said that from "disciples" Jesus' followers became true "believers" through the Easter experience.

But how did the disciples arrive at the faith in Jesus Christ through the Resurrection? The appearances of the Risen One "signified" that Jesus had reached, beyond death, the eschatological state. The fullness awaited in eschatological time had been accomplished in him; or conversely, eschatology had intruded into time. The entirely new condition of Jesus' humanity, never experienced before, aroused questions as to the identity of the Risen One. The disciples were thus sent back to the testimony of Jesus during his earthly life. Prompted by the Spirit, they recalled the

things the pre-Easter Jesus had done and said, which had been mostly misunderstood at the time. This memory of the historical Jesus played a decisive role in the genesis of the Christian faith of the disciples. It supplied the link between Jesus himself and the disciples' faith interpretation of him after the resurrection. Through it the Church's Christological faith truly goes back to, and can be based on, the Jesus of history, thus finding in him its historical foundation.

This goes to show that, while it is true that no "life of Jesus" can possibly be written, a general portrait of Jesus' personality, in its singular originality, can nevertheless be drawn. The "Jesus of history" means more than the "historical Jesus", reached through mere historical enquiry. And while it is true that the human psychology of the man Jesus *in itself* lies beyond the reach of our direct enquiry, it remains, however, certain that through his words and actions, his way of doing things and his choices, his associations and demeanour, his relationships with human persons and his attitude toward the God of his fathers in one word, through his entire human "story" Jesus allows the secret of his person to shine through gradually, though in a manner which still remains hidden and will only be disclosed in the light of Easter.

It seems possible then to show that between Jesus' "implicit Christology" and the "explicit Christology" of the apostolic Church there is at once continuity and discontinuity, or better, continuity-in-discontinuity. This applies also to Jesus himself as he passes from his kenotic state to his glorified condition through the real transformation of his humanhood in the Resurrection; it applies to the disciples as they pass from an incipient discipleship to a Christian faith commitment through their Easter experience.

Insofar as through the faith interpretation of the story of Jesus conveyed by the New Testament witness, the general picture of the original personality of the man of Nazareth can be retrieved, we are enabled to follow anew the journey made by the disciples themselves, as from their living encounter with the historical Jesus they passed with wonder and gratitude to the discovery of the significance of his person in God's own eyes on their behalf. The route led them from a personal companionship with the earthly Jesus to the realization of his mystery as the Christ. The same route needs to be followed by would-be disciples and believers in every age and in all circumstances and different contexts; it marks the genesis which is built up in the Christian faith in accordance with the pedagogy of God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ. The Christian faith cannot but be based on a personal en-

counter with the man Jesus, and Christology on Jesuology.

Then the question is asked: what was the living centre of Jesus' message, the fundamental point of reference in his life, the absolute value conveyed by his words and works alike? The answer is undoubtedly: the breaking through in history of the Reign of God. Jesus announced the Reign of God; he did not announce himself. In today's parlance, he was entirely centred on God and his Reign, theocentric or regnocentric. For Jesus, the Kingdom was symbolic of the new "rule" God would bring about in the world, renewing all things and restoring all relationships between God and human beings as well as among people. For Jesus, too, the Reign of God was impending; indeed, it was not only at hand but had already begun to break through in his own mission. Jesus announced it as the irruption of God's rule among people, by which God manifests his glory. This is why the arrival of the Kingdom is Good News.

A personal encounter with the man Jesus must therefore put in full evidence the centrality and significance of the Reign of God for him. The theme of the Reign of God undoubtedly places God at the source and at the heart of Jesus' action. The Reign of God really stands for God's beginning to act in the world in a decisive manner, becoming manifest and putting order in creation. This takes place through Jesus' human actions.

Jesus' earthly mission is accompanied by miracles. It would be wrong to treat them as merely establishing the credentials of God's prophet of the Kingdom. The miracles of healing and the exorcisms (akin to healings) that, generally speaking, figure among the unassailable historical data of Jesus' earthly ministry are signs and symbols signifying that through Jesus God is bringing about his rule on earth, overcoming the destructive power of sin and death. They are the first fruits of the operative presence of the Kingdom of God among people, a constitutive part of the inauguration of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is his rule among people. It requires a complete reorientation of human relationships and an ordering of human society according to God's mind. The values, which, in accordance with God's Reign, must characterise human relationships, can be summed up in a few words: freedom, brotherhood, peace and justice. Accordingly throughout his missionary action Jesus denounces whatever in the society of his time stands against those values. This sets him in opposition to various categories of his own

people: he chastises the oppressive legalism of the scribes, the exploitation of people by the priestly caste, the arrogant self-righteousness of the Pharisees. Jesus is not a conformist, but a subversive on behalf of the rule of God. He refuses to abide by the stereotyped unjust structures of the society in which he lives; he associates with sinners and tax-collectors, with Samaritans and prostitutes, with all the despised sections of the society of his time. To all of them he announces that the Reign of God has come about; he invites them all to enter into it through conversion and an ordering of their life.

The Kingdom of God that is coming about through Jesus' life and action is predominantly addressed to the poor, the *anawim* of God, that is, all the despised categories of people, the oppressed and the downtrodden. For all these Jesus manifests a preferential option that amounts to a declaration of God's own mind in their favour. The poor to whom the Kingdom of God is preferentially destined are all those who suffer disability under the pressure of unjust structures. This is not to say that economic and dehumanizing poverty constitutes for Jesus an object of choice for its own sake. Jesus is on the side of the poor, not of poverty. What counts for him is readiness to enter into the Kingdom by practising its values. The poor are those predisposed to it, who place their trust in God, not in themselves, their power and their belongings. The values of the Kingdom are present and operative among them.

It is clear that Jesus' attitude to justice and poverty goes beyond the message of the Old Testament prophets on the subject. The prophets had spoken in favour of the poor and the oppressed and in defense of their rights. Their prophetic discourse was clearly indicative of God's mind on their behalf: God's predilection for the poor and the divine wrath at the injustice inflicted upon them. Jesus, however, does not only manifest a preferential option for the poor; he is not merely "in their favour". He identifies himself with them personally and associates with them preferentially. He is not only for the poor; he belongs *to* and is *with* them. In this association of Jesus with the poor, God's preferential love for them comes to a climax. Jesus' attitude is not only indicative of God's mind for the poor; it embodies God's commitment to and involvement with them.

Thus, the entire mission of Jesus is centred on the Reign of God, that is, on God as he is establishing his rule on earth in his messenger. Centred on the Reign of God, Jesus is centred on God himself. There is no distance for him between the one and the other:

regnocentrism and theocentrism coincide. The God whom Jesus calls Father is at the centre of his message, of his life and of his person. Jesus did not primarily speak about himself; he came to announce God and the coming of his Reign, and to be at God's service. God is at the centre, not the messenger.

Yet, Jesus is not only a prophet, not even merely the "eschatological prophet" who announces that God's Reign is finally being established on earth. He situates himself in a radically new way in relation to God and God's Reign: It is in his life and in his person that God is intervening in history in a decisive manner with the inauguration of his Kingdom.

In spite of Jesus' apparent reluctance to declare himself through the use of messianic titles, an astonishing self-awareness emerges from his words and actions. His attitudes and his demeanour altogether exceed, in the most natural fashion, all accepted norms. No known category could ever encompass him. His thorough originality and the difference he makes manifest themselves in many ways. We have already noted the singular way in which Jesus situates himself in relation to the Reign of God. We may point to some other ways in which his thorough originality stands out.

Jesus presents himself as a *rabbi*, but his teaching arouses astonishment, for he teaches with a singular authority. Jesus makes the enormous claim that his authority surpasses that of Moses. He declares God's ultimate purpose not as a lesson he has learned, not even as a message he has received from God, but out of his own ineffable familiarity with God himself. Jesus simply knows the mind of God, which he proclaims. His way of speaking implies that he perceives it in an immediate intuition, and he declares it in his own name: "I say to you". At the source of Jesus' personal authority in teaching is a surprising nearness to God, the clearest witness to which is the term *Abba* with which Jesus invoked God in prayer in an unprecedented manner.

Another feature that contributes to make up Jesus' surprising originality is the way in which he gathers disciples around him and relates himself to them: on the one hand, faced with their slowness to believe he shows an infinite patience which translates in human terms God's own pedagogy towards people; on the other hand, he makes upon their lives personal claims, which outdo in their rigour all human authority. To leave everything behind to follow him is equal to opting for the Kingdom of God; to look behind in hesitation is to be unworthy and unfit for the King-

dom. In this claim to supreme authority over the would-be disciples, more perhaps than through any other feature, does Jesus manifest the singular character of his personality. He truly stands among people as God's own presence.

## II. Asiatic Models of Jesus

Not everything has been said here; yet enough will have been mentioned to show, in general terms, a clear similarity between the features of Jesus' human personality just recalled and the ways of presenting Jesus with "an Asian face" suggested by the members of the Asian Synod of Bishops. Proposition 6 of the Synod Fathers' made explicit mention of such features as "Jesus Christ as the Teacher of Wisdom, the Healer, the Liberator, the Spiritual Guide, the Enlightened One, the Compassionate Friend of the poor, the Good Samaritan, the Good Shepherd, the Obedient One". It added: "It must be kept in mind that such initial proclamation will be completed with a full catechesis on Jesus Christ as truly God and man".

If we examine the Christologies which over the last decades have been developing in the Asian context, it is clear that they are intended to respond to the concrete reality of the Asian continent, as it has been described repeatedly by the official documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). As early as 1974, in the Conclusions of the Taipei First General Assembly of the FABC, explicit mention was made of three components which together make up the Asian reality and call for a threefold dialogue: with cultures, with religions and with the poor. Progressively the realisation also dawned that these three tasks cannot remain separate as if they were adequately distinct from each other; rather, they must go hand in hand. The result is that what is now growing in the Asian context can best be described as a Jesuology of liberation, thought out in the context of religious and cultural pluralism; or, better still, as a liberation Jesuology in inter-religious dialogue.

It is important to point out this integrated character of Asian Jesuology, in which the various dimensions of the context concur to form an organic whole. For this feature is not without far-reaching implications. It fosters in fact an approach to the man Jesus, which Christian believers can develop in conjunction with those of other religious faiths, in a common effort to respond religiously to a concrete reality shared by all.

A comparison may be enlightening here with the situation that obtains in the African continent. In spite

of vast differences between one situation and the other, it would be true today that on the African continent too the context is often made up of the twofold reality of massive poverty and multiple religiosity. Yet a great difference seems to exist between the Christologies to which this situation gives rise in the African continent and in the Asian counterpart. Two distinct Christologies seem to be developing on the African continent, side by side and without much apparent interaction, one of inculturation and the other of liberation; so far both tend to remain separate. In the Asian context, by contrast, inculturation, dialogue and liberation fuse together into an organic whole, and one Jesuology of liberation is progressively emerging from the praxis of inter-religious dialogue.

There is no need — nor is there space here — to enter into a detailed analysis of the contribution made by individual authors to the emergence of such an Asian contextual Jesuology. We must be satisfied to recall, without prejudice to others, some of the important names which immediately come to mind as being especially significant in this respect. In the Indian context, they would include: S. Kappen, M.M. Thomas, S. Rayan, G. Soares-Prabhu, F. Wilfred, M. Amaldoss and outside India: C.S. Song, A. Pieris, among others.

We have to go beyond the specific contribution of individual authors; the question is to be asked how in the concrete context in which an Asian Jesuology is successfully being built, the road can best be covered. This road must lead from a vibrant discovery of the man of Nazareth to an adequate Christological account of the mystery of his personal identity as Son uniquely related to the God whom he called his Father. The apostolic Church already found herself faced with this problem, as she endeavoured to ascend from what Jesus represented for her members — the man who makes us free, the teacher of truth, the Messiah of God — to what he was in himself and in God's own eyes: Son, Word, Wisdom. The dynamics of faith compelled her to make the necessary ascent from the functionality of the man Jesus to the ontology of the Son Incarnate.

The historical Jesus had intentionally kept his distance from the messianic titles which were familiar to the Jewish tradition in which he proclaimed his message. When, however, the apostolic Church tried to express her newly discovered faith in Jesus, she did have recourse to such titles and progressively applied them to him. But it is important to note that in the process the messianic titles, taken over from the Old Testament, acquired new, up to then unheard of meaning. The case of the title "Son of God" is emblematic

in this regard. In the Old Testament the title had a broad meaning, in virtue of which it could have different applications, being used, for instance, of the Chosen People of God, or of a singular just person among God's people. It applied in a special way to the Davidic king as the representative of God among his people. When, however, the title came to be used of Jesus by the apostolic Church, it progressively took on an added, heretofore unknown, meaning till it came to express the divine Sonship of the Son of God who had become man in Jesus Christ. The title "Son of God" came in fact to occupy a privileged place in the Christology of the apostolic Church, as it seemed better suited to express the mystery of Jesus' person than some other titles were capable of doing.

Not all the titles that are used in different contexts to convey the mystery of Jesus Christ are destined to the same fortune; some will be found in the long run more suitable than others. But the final test of their suitability will be their ability to express in an adequate — though unavoidably imperfect — manner, and in a way at once intelligible and appealing in each particular context, what Jesus is for people, and who he is in the eyes of God.

This observation would apply to the titles of healer and liberator, of guru and enlightened one, to give only some examples among those that have been mentioned earlier. Theologians will always have to be concerned at once with the contextual appeal and the hoped for adequacy of meaning of the models they propose in a bid to give — or to restore — to Jesus his "Asian face".

It is heartening to know that in this effort, as the Asian Bishop members of the Synod meant to declare in no ambiguous terms, theologians have the support of the Pastors of the Asian Churches. This did not escape the attention of observers of the Synod proceedings. As is well known, the *Lineamenta* of the Synod, prepared in the Roman Curia, contained a disparaging statement with regard to the Asian theologians. This, however, disappeared altogether in the "working paper" based on the observations made by the Asian Bishops' Conferences on the *Lineamenta*. An insidious question was, however, added — the origin of which remained unclear — to the Second Report of Cardinal Paul Shan Kuo-hsi for discussion in the workshops. It read: "How can the Church deal with some unorthodox trends among some theologians with regard to the divinity of Jesus and his unique mediation of salvation? How can Jesus be portrayed as more than simply one of the many saviours?" The

Bishops chose to ignore the first part of the question and responded positively to the second part. After proposing in Proposition 6, mentioned above, some models for a "Jesus with an Asian face", they went on in Proposition 7, also cited above, to express their encouragement to theologians to "pursue their work of developing an inculturated theology that responds to Asian realities". "The Synod", the proposition ends, "proposes that the Church authorities, while overseeing the work of theologians, will also give them the encouragement they need".

The voice of the Pastors of the Asian Churches will be of comfort to theologians in Asia whose demanding task it is to show not only that there is "room for Christ in Asia", but that the Asian Jesus is he in whom the deepest aspirations of the Asian peoples can be fulfilled.

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Jan Van Bragt, CICM

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## Japon: Inculturation des Valeurs Evangéliques dans les Pays Bouddhistes

Le P. Jan Van Bragt, CICM, docteur en philosophie de l'Université de Louvain, travaille au Japon depuis 1961. Il a enseigné à l'Université de Nanzan (Nagoya) de 1976 à 1996. Il est membre de l'Institut pour la religion et la culture de cette même université. Cette étude a été publiée en anglais dans la revue *Japan Mission Journal* (Tôkyô, hiver 1998). La traduction est de la rédaction d'Eglises d'Asie.

Pour commencer je voudrais préciser que, bien que ma connaissance du bouddhisme soit assez large, l'expérience que j'ai de ce qu'on appelle la culture bouddhiste se limite à celle du Japon. En outre, comme on le verra plus tard, je crains que le Japon ne soit pas, à strictement parler, un pays bouddhiste comme d'autres pays asiatiques. Je prie donc ceux qui connaissent bien ces contrées de compléter et corriger ce que je vais dire. Ce papier comprendra trois parties. 1) Considérations préalables; 2) Quelques réflexions sur l'inculturation dans les pays bouddhistes; 3) L'inculturation au Japon comme un exemple concret dans une "situation complexe".

### I. Considérations préalables

#### 1- L'inculturation pour qui?

Nous sommes tous d'accord, je présume, pour dire que l'inculturation est un élément constitutif de la mission de l'Eglise. Mais, peut-être parce que je suis âgé et que j'ai connu différentes interprétations de la mission, je sens la nécessité avant d'aller plus loin de me rappeler encore une fois ce qu'est la mission de l'Eglise. Je dois, bien sûr, être bref et je me limiterai donc à noter deux formulations issues du document *Dialogue et mission* du Secrétariat pour les non-chrétiens du 10 juin 1984, lequel s'appuie sur les définitions de Vatican II: "La mission de l'Eglise s'accomplit par l'opération au moyen de laquelle l'Eglise devient présente à toute personne et à tous les peuples" (Ad gentes) et: "La mission de l'Eglise est aussi de travailler à l'extension du Royaume et de ses valeurs parmi tous, hommes et femmes".

J'ai choisi ces textes parce qu'ils supposent à l'évidence la nécessité de l'inculturation mais aussi parce qu'ils ne laissent plus aucune place au vieux concept "maîtrise des autres religions". En ce sens, je

veux redire ce que j'ai déjà écrit il y a quelques années: "Je ne pense pas que le rôle du christianisme au Japon soit de supprimer et de supplanter ou même d'absorber les autres religions: shinto, sectes bouddhistes, etc. Ce ne serait pas une contribution positive pour le Japon et je ne considérerai pas l'inculturation comme moyen stratégique" (C. Cornille et V. Neckerbrouck, *A Universal Faith ?* (Louvain, Peeters Press, 1992), 56).

Une première directive concrète, quoique négative pour l'inculturation du christianisme dans les pays bouddhistes pourrait être: le christianisme devrait s'abstenir de toutes attaques contre le bouddhisme bien que dans un dialogue amical il puisse être permis et même indiqué de prendre conscience les uns et les autres de nos défauts réciproques. Sur ce point, nous devons résolument prendre nos distances quant aux pratiques des sectes fondamentalistes protestantes. Reste cependant une question plus délicate que nous ne pouvons pas éluder indéfiniment: Devons-nous aussi nous abstenir de toutes actions qui directement pousseraient un fidèle bouddhiste à s'éloigner de son allégeance au bouddhisme pour entrer dans l'Eglise? Ce n'est pas sans inquiétude que j'ose vous soumettre la conclusion à laquelle je suis arrivé provisoirement. Mais, pour mieux situer ma position, je devrais tout d'abord vous donner quelques indications qui lui sont sous-jacentes.

Je suis missionnaire au Japon. Depuis maintenant de nombreuses années, je me suis trouvé engagé dans un dialogue avec les bouddhistes avec vraiment très peu de ce qu'on pourrait appeler prosélytisme. Ce que je considère encore comme missionnaire en moi est dû au fait que, dans ce dialogue, je parle toujours et témoigne de Jésus-Christ selon mes pauvres moyens. Il y a quelques années, j'ai entendu des accusations formulées contre le christianisme par des bouddhistes

thaïlandais : “*Vous avez un double langage: vous dites que vous voulez dialoguer avec nous alors que, dans le même temps, vous essayez d’attirer nos fidèles*”. Ce que je vais écrire maintenant peut être considéré comme une tentative de réponse à cette accusation.

Je crois vraiment que nous devrions nous abstenir de toutes tentatives d’attirer des fidèles vraiment convaincus hors de leur obédience bouddhiste. Il peut arriver que quelques-uns d’entre eux se tournent vers le Christ et rejoignent l’Eglise. Mais ici, je parle de “*fidèles vraiment convaincus*” et je proteste vigoureusement contre cette présupposition qui apparaît sous-jacente à cette accusation de ce bouddhiste thaïlandais, à savoir que pour être honnête, nous devrions ne convertir aucun ressortissant thaïlandais (excepté peut-être ceux des minorités ethniques), puisque chaque thaïlandais est bouddhiste et qu’ainsi le bouddhisme peut revendiquer un droit sur eux ou elles, par le seul fait qu’ils sont thaïlandais. Ce serait une négation évidente de la liberté de religion de la personne. Aussi je suggère que les efforts du prosélytisme chrétien soient, et en fait ils le sont la plupart du temps, dirigés vers ceux qui pour quelques raisons ne trouvent pas la nourriture spirituelle dont ils ont besoin dans la religion établie. Au Japon, une telle accusation ne saurait être entendue parce que dans ce pays, le bouddhisme ne revendique aucun droit sur les Japonais et qu’il a conscience que la plupart des Japonais sont religieusement indifférents plutôt que “*bouddhistes vraiment convaincus*”. L’accusation se retrouve, par contre, quelquefois chez certains shintoïstes convaincus qu’être japonais c’est être shintoïste.

## 2- *Qu’est-ce que j’entends par “inculturation” ?*

J’espère voir apparaître une meilleure et théologiquement mieux étayée définition de l’inculturation, mais pour l’instant je veux partager avec vous comment, personnellement, je vois les choses. Je vois l’inculturation avant tout comme “*la volonté d’être une annonce crédible du salut, lisible comme telle par tous, chacun dans sa situation concrète*”. On peut y distinguer deux éléments. Le premier, “*vouloir devenir une annonce*”, quelque chose qui puisse résonner dans le cœur et l’esprit des gens; le second, “*une annonce de salut*” qui est une réponse au réel besoin des gens de voir la lumière du Royaume.

## 3- *Les deux aspects de l’inculturation*

En ce sens, l’inculturation recèle en elle-même deux côtés, l’un positif, l’autre négatif. Positivement, cela signifie adaptation aux valeurs positives existantes dans une culture ou une religiosité donnée. Ici, l’Eglise

peut “*s’enrichir de la sagesse infinie des nations de la terre*” (Jean Paul II); en d’autres mots, s’enrichir des valeurs négligées jusqu’ici tout au long de l’histoire occidentale de l’Eglise. Mais d’autre part, une véritable inculturation suppose également une “*crise*” des valeurs existantes et de la religiosité ambiante à la lumière des valeurs évangéliques ainsi que, à la lumière des véritables besoins des gens, un effort pour en corriger et compléter les déficiences. Plutôt qu’une adaptation unilatérale, l’inculturation est vue, en empruntant les mots d’Aylward Shorter, comme “*une relation créative et dynamique entre le message chrétien et une ou des cultures*” (Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis, 1988), p.11).

## 4- *Inculturation dans quoi?*

Très généralement, “*l’inculturation du christianisme*” est vue, je crois, comme une inculturation dans le “*génie*” ou la “*religiosité*” d’un peuple ou d’un pays. Ici, pourtant, il est important de réfléchir à la distinction que font souvent les spécialistes des religions, entre la “*petite tradition*” (la religiosité fondamentale autochtone) et la “*grande tradition*” (la religion historiquement établie ou ‘grande’ religion). Je crois que cette distinction a son importance pour toutes les cultures dans lesquelles une “*grande religion*” a été soit établie soit a prévalu à une certaine époque. Ainsi, pour citer un seul exemple, l’inculturation dans un pays musulman comme l’Indonésie serait impensable si elle ne tenait pas compte de l’*Adât* (NdD: us et coutumes de tel ou tel groupe humain). Cette prise en compte pourrait être d’une spéciale importance pour des “*nations bouddhistes*” ou de culture à dominante bouddhiste; et cela parce que le bouddhisme s’est toujours voulu tolérant envers la religiosité des différents peuples parmi lesquels il s’est propagé et très profondément inculturé. Par là, je veux souligner que l’inculturation du christianisme dans une nation bouddhiste n’est jamais une simple adaptation à un ensemble général ou aux valeurs de l’idéal bouddhiste.

## 5- *Qu’est-ce qu’un “pays bouddhiste” ?*

J’ai déjà fait observer que le Japon ne peut être déclaré pays bouddhiste vraiment représentatif, mais il peut aider à montrer un moment de ce que le terme “*pays bouddhiste*” peut signifier. Je ne suis certainement pas prêt à donner une définition claire et précise et essaierai donc de proposer quelques formulations.

1) Un pays où le bouddhisme est une religion établie. Ceci peut convenir à la situation (mis à part quelques groupes minoritaires) du Tibet, du Sri Lanka, du

Myanmar (Birmanie), de la Thaïlande, du Cambodge, du Laos et peut-être du Vietnam, mais ne peut s'appliquer à la Chine, à la Corée et au Japon où le bouddhisme coexiste avec une ou plusieurs autres religions: en Chine, avec le confucianisme et le taoïsme, en Corée, avec le confucianisme, au Japon avec le shintoïsme (et aussi le confucianisme, bien qu'il ne fasse pas directement fonction de religion).

2) Un pays où le gouvernement a été ou est encore intimement lié au bouddhisme comme religion établie. Là encore, la Chine, la Corée et le Japon ne peuvent être appelés pays bouddhistes quoiqu'ils aient connu dans leur histoire des périodes où il lui était lié.

3) Une nation où éthique et principes de vie sociale suivent la voie du bouddhisme. Ce qu'on peut probablement dire être le cas, du moins à un haut degré dans les autres "pays bouddhistes" mais, et de façon non univoque, de la Chine, de la Corée et du Japon où la confucianisme a eu une influence décisive sur ces différents points. Ce peut être significatif ici, de réfléchir à l'importance de l'impact du bouddhisme sur les rites de passage dans la vie des individus et sur les rites marquants du cycle des saisons. A cet égard, le bouddhisme au Japon apparaît avoir moins d'influence que le shinto.

4) Une nation où le "génie national" est profondément pénétré de l'esprit du bouddhisme. Cette formulation est, de l'aveu général, plus imprécise et plus difficile à saisir que les modèles précédents. Mais ce pourrait être quelque chose de fondamental. Par "génie national" j'entends quelque chose comme les "codes culturels de base" dont parle N.S. Eisenstadt (N.S. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and The Transformation of Societies* (New York, the Free Press), 1978). Cet auteur tient que toute société possède de semblables "règles du jeu" constitutives des structures cachées ou profondes du système social. Il décrit ces "codes" comme des modes généralisés de vie religieuse ou des orientations morales reliant les larges contours de l'ordre institutionnel par des réponses aux problèmes symboliques et culturels fondamentaux de la vie sociale. Il souligne également que ces codes fondamentaux apparaissent être vraiment tenaces et, au cours du temps, capables de résister à toutes sortes de bouleversements et d'influences. Ils ne sont pas profondément transformés par un changement de régime politique (comme dans le cas de la Russie et de la Chine en ce vingtième siècle) et peuvent être aussi fondamentalement imperméables à l'émergence d'une nouvelle religion institutionnelle dominante. Si c'est vrai, et je crois que ce l'est, l'inculturation véritable devrait être définie comme l'inculturation dans le code

culturel de base d'un peuple.

## II. Quelques réflexions sur l'inculturation dans les pays bouddhistes

### A. Les valeurs bouddhistes dominantes

Une liste suffisante de ces valeurs doit être dressée, non pour faire apparaître le christianisme comme inférieur aux yeux des gens, mais pour enrichir non seulement l'église locale mais aussi l'Eglise universelle. La liste suivante des vertus typiques du bouddhisme, quoique n'ayant pas la prétention d'être exhaustive, voudrait cependant en couvrir les points essentiels.

I. Respect du *karma*. On pourrait soutenir que l'élément par lequel le bouddhisme a influencé la mentalité des occidentaux le plus profondément est cette idée de *karma*: l'idée que chaque acte, bon ou mauvais, produit nécessairement un résultat correspondant, si ce n'est en cette vie, du moins dans l'autre. Nous chrétiens, pouvons honorer cette idée qui, *grosso modo*, correspond à l'idée chrétienne de la rémunération du bien et du mal. Mais pour nos convertis nous avons à l'équilibrer avec l'idée du pardon divin et à leur montrer que seule la volonté libre est passible de châtement. L'idée bouddhiste concomitante (ou plutôt indienne) de transmigration est davantage problématique. La doctrine du cycle des renaissances, pourtant, n'a pas de racines également profondes dans tous les pays où elle peut être facilement remplacée par l'idée chrétienne du caractère unique de la vie terrestre.

II. Le "Tu ne tueras point" est le précepte bouddhiste essentiel. Théoriquement, il s'entend non seulement des êtres humains mais de tous les "êtres sensibles". Pour ce qui est de la vie animale, cet interdit a été différemment interprété selon les pays et le style de vie des peuples. Néanmoins, il est à l'origine du profond respect à l'égard de toute vie. Il est conseillé aux chrétiens de ces pays de suivre en général le style de vie de leurs voisins bouddhistes (si possible avec une préférence pour le végétarisme ou au moins en s'abstenant de manger certaines viandes animales, Rom 14:20).

Mais le réel impact de ce précepte apparaît plus global encore. Il a suscité un esprit de non-violence (*ahimsâ*), de tolérance envers le comportement et les opinions d'autrui et de non-interférence dans leurs affaires. Comme l'écrit Edward Conze, ceci explique le climat général dans les pays bouddhistes de "non-agressivité, de douceur et de tolérance illimitée". Devenir chrétien ne devrait pas faire perdre cette douceur.

III. Altruisme et non-moi, qui neutralisent la tendance naturelle de l'homme à l'égoïsme et à l'affirmation de soi, sont, à n'en pas douter, le message central du bouddhisme. Ce qui est à l'origine non seulement d'une attitude morale fondamentale mais également comme l'objet central de réflexion et pour ainsi dire comme une façon de penser obligatoire. L'altruisme comme morale et comme attitude religieuse sont certainement aussi d'importantes valeurs évangéliques, mais dans la tradition chrétienne, elles semblent n'avoir pas reçu la même attention que dans le bouddhisme. Pas étonnant que sur ce point-là également, nous ayons beaucoup à apprendre du bouddhisme.

Comme éléments concrets d'inculturation les points suivants méritent toute notre attention.

a) Le bouddhisme promeut aussi l'altruisme par sa doctrine de la non-existence du moi ou de l'ego. Bien qu'elle soit interprétée de différentes façons, je ne pense pas que le christianisme puisse l'adopter comme telle. Car la valeur de la personne individuelle irremplaçable aux yeux de Dieu et la responsabilité finale de chacun personnellement devant Lui sont trop au centre de la spiritualité chrétienne. Autrement dit, ces conceptions chrétiennes ont été déformées en Occident et surtout dans les temps modernes, en un individualisme éhonté et une attitude d'affirmation de soi excessive. Il est par conséquent urgent que, dans les pays bouddhistes, la théologie chrétienne et la catéchèse se purifient de ces distorsions et parviennent heureusement à une nouvelle synthèse de ses conceptions de la personne et du non-moi.

b) Le bouddhisme rejoint l'altruisme au travers également de sa doctrine du *pratītya-samutpāda* (coproduction conditionnée); je n'existe pas ni en, ni par moi, mais en dépendance (par grâce de) de toutes les autres entités qui sont dans l'univers. Cette conception est très précieuse pour contrebalancer notre tendance naturelle à l'égoïsme. Suffisamment intériorisée, elle nous conduit à exprimer spontanément notre gratitude envers les autres et même envers les choses. Dans cette perspective, la valeur de la personne n'est pas niée, elle peut et devrait, en pays bouddhiste, avoir sa place, je crois, dans nos vies chrétiennes.

c) Quand il s'agit de contrebalancer notre penchant naturel à l'égoïsme au détriment des autres, la tradition bouddhiste nous livre un autre précieux secours: une série de quatre méditations appelées "les quatre degrés de Brahma" (*brahma-vihāra*) ou encore "les quatre infinis". Ce sont: l'amitié (*maitrī*), la compassion (*karunā*, souffrir avec les autres), la joie bienveillante (*mudītā*, se réjouir avec les autres),

l'impartialité (*upeksā*). Dans la première méditation, par exemple, on se concentre sur "l'expression" de sentiments de bienveillance, premièrement envers soi-même, puis envers une personne chère, envers une personne indifférente ensuite, et enfin envers un ennemi. Nous gagnerions beaucoup, sans aucun doute, à intégrer ces exercices dans notre vie spirituelle.

IV. Un esprit de méditation. L'élément important dans la voie du bouddhisme comme "*méthode de libération (salut)*" est la méditation: se tourner vers l'intérieur de soi pour venir au contact du plus profond de son esprit et (au moins dans le *Mahāyāna*) de l'absolue réalité (nature de Bouddha) qui y réside. C'est seulement par ce moyen et non en se contentant d'un bon raisonnement et d'une vie droite que l'on pourra atteindre la connaissance libératrice ou l'illumination. Dans le christianisme, bien sûr, nous n'attendons pas le salut d'une connaissance transcendante obtenue par la méditation mais par la foi et la grâce divine. Aussi, l'insistance unilatérale sur la méditation peut conduire la vie spirituelle à un certain élitisme pendant que la moyenne des gens se satisfera d'une "*religiosité de seconde classe*". Je crois encore que le christianisme a beaucoup à gagner, spécialement dans les pays bouddhistes mais pas uniquement, en encourageant l'esprit et la pratique de la méditation.

Il s'agit ici, avant tout, de considérations purement humanistes. Dans les pays orientaux, le bouddhisme insiste sur le fait que la méditation rejoint la conviction confucéenne que "*l'homme*" n'est pas né réellement 'être humain' mais qu'il doit le devenir par un processus d'auto-culture. Au milieu d'une vie quotidienne trépidante (surtout dans les pays industrialisés) nous avons tendance à vivre hors ou à la surface de nous-mêmes (masque social), et c'est surtout dans la méditation que chacun pourra atteindre au plus profond de son humanité, là où s'accomplit la transformation. Cette conception est à l'origine de cet "*humanisme oriental*" de grande qualité dont le christianisme ne peut pas ne pas tenir compte s'il croit vraiment que "*la grâce ne détruit pas la nature mais la conduit à sa perfection*".

Il est clair, cependant, que la méditation orientale, spécialement dans le bouddhisme, aspire à plus que cela. En langage chrétien, nous pouvons dire qu'elle vise à intérioriser la vie de foi dans la totalité de la personne (y compris le corps) ou à s'assurer que la religiosité ne s'arrête pas au niveau d'une acceptation intellectuelle de la doctrine ou à l'observance des pratiques prescrites, mais est bien "*ressentie*" et "*savourée*". On peut dire, je crois, que les gens dans les pays bouddhistes (et, encore une fois, pas seulement là) sont seulement attirés

par cette sorte de foi. Ce n'est pas le moment de développer ce thème davantage, mais quelques observations sont à faire:

1) Je pense qu'il vaut la peine de discuter la question de savoir comment concrètement générer cet esprit de méditation, pour nous-mêmes comme pour nos chrétiens. Nous ne faisons pas appel aux méthodes traditionnelles comme les retraites, etc., car il est question, ici, de savoir quelles méthodes de méditation bouddhiste adopter. Heureusement, bien des expériences ont été tentées dans ce domaine. Serait-ce trop tôt pour essayer de réunir des informations sur ces tentatives et déboucher sur quelques jugements au moins provisoires en définissant quelques lignes de conduites ?

2) Une question qui s'y rattache est celle qui concerne le rôle du monachisme dans les chrétientés des pays bouddhistes. Dans le bouddhisme, le "*sangha*" (l'ordre monastique spécialiste de la méditation) est absolument central, dans la théorie comme dans l'institution et la pratique quotidienne. On a remarqué que le bouddhisme s'est propagé grâce aux monastères plutôt que par la multiplication des postes de mission dans l'espoir de contacter les gens directement. Dans le christianisme, le monachisme n'a jamais eu la même sorte de place centrale et dans l'évangélisation de l'Europe, le rôle des monastères a été de beaucoup surestimé. Dans les pays bouddhistes, il est essentiel, je crois, que le christianisme soit représenté par un nombre suffisant de monastères de moines contemplatifs. C'est éminemment souhaitable quand il s'agit de dialoguer avec des moines bouddhistes.

3) Un caractère frappant de la méditation bouddhiste est le rôle important donné au corps et à sa position (bien que cela vienne du *yoga* indien). Sur ce point nous avons à n'en pas douter, beaucoup de choses à apprendre et cela ne se cantonne pas à la méditation mais s'étend aussi à la position du corps dans la liturgie. Il s'agit d'une question non seulement du "*corps en méditation*" mais aussi du "*corps en position d'adoration*". Il y a quelque chose d'ironique à constater que les bouddhistes qui ne sont pas supposés se livrer à l'adoration au sens strict frappent les observateurs par leur "*piété profonde et spontanée*", à la différence de bien des prêtres catholiques.

V. La générosité. La "*vertu*" première dans la liste des "perfections" du *Mahâyâna* est '*dâna*', la générosité dans le don. Dans la pratique, la recommandation est destinée aux dons en faveur des monastères bouddhistes, des moines mendiants et des temples, mais il n'en reste pas moins qu'elle a favorisé l'esprit qui considère que ce que nous possédons peut être utile à quelque chose qui se trouve au delà de notre propre satisfaction

matérielle. En un sens, elle pourrait être transposée en vertu de pauvreté évangélique, un détachement de toutes possessions terrestres, une vertu nécessaire dans nos sociétés d'abondance d'aujourd'hui (sociétés que plusieurs pays bouddhistes d'ailleurs ont entrepris de développer).

VI. Sensibilité esthétique. Je ne pense pas qu'il faille généraliser ce point. Bien des temples bouddhistes sont de style "*kitsch*", mais il est aussi vrai que la tradition bouddhiste a favorisé chez les peuples d'Asie une sensibilité esthétique spécifique généralement de haute qualité et avec un grand nombre d'oeuvres où se mêlent une grande beauté et une profonde religiosité. La leçon à tirer pour nous serait double. Premièrement nous devrions faire très attention en choisissant les objets d'art religieux que nous importons traditionnellement des pays de tradition chrétienne. En effet, le meilleur de l'art "*occidental*" (chant grégorien, icônes, etc.) transcende le particulier et peut être apprécié par des gens issus du bouddhisme. Deuxièmement, et c'est peut-être là une question plus délicate, nous devrions promouvoir discrètement la naissance d'un véritable art chrétien autochtone. Si la question de l'inculturation dans tous les domaines est importante, (ce qui n'autorise pas la contrainte) elle serait spécialement importante dans les pays bouddhistes.

VII. Respect de la nature. Une qualité, bien sûr, devenue hautement nécessaire pour notre planète écologiquement en danger. Comment le bouddhisme se situe-t-il par rapport à ce problème ? Nous devons dire, je crois, que dès l'origine et dans son essence, le bouddhisme est un chemin de concentration vers l'intériorité de l'homme sans aucune référence spéciale à la nature (ou à la société). Egalement, l'esprit général de non-ingérence, déjà mentionné, ne peut être ici directement invoqué puisque une existence humaine est impossible sans un certain nombre d'interférences avec la nature et débouche par conséquent sur des questions matérielles. Tout ceci ne signifie pas cependant que nous ne puissions trouver à cet égard, dans le bouddhisme vivant certains points de valeurs. A titre provisoire, nous pourrions examiner les points suivants.

1) La doctrine du *pratîtya-samutoâda*, déjà mentionnée, peut certainement être utilisée pour la prise de conscience d'une dépendance mutuelle de l'homme et de la nature.

2) En ce moment plusieurs pays bouddhistes (ou même une grande partie d'entre eux) vivent encore une vie rurale et ont conservé plus de liens organiques avec la nature que beaucoup de sociétés industrialisées. Ainsi rituels et festivités bouddhistes sont-ils encore fortement

colorés du cycle des saisons.

3) En Extrême-Orient, principalement sous l'influence du taoïsme, la découverte bouddhiste du moi le plus profond signifie, "*communion avec l'univers*" et spécialement avec la nature. Se retirer sur la montagne ou dans la forêt est ensuite devenu, non pas simplement une fuite loin des distractions de la société des hommes mais en même temps une "*communion avec les forces curatives et salutaires de la nature*".

## B. Quelques points qui nécessiteraient d'être complétés ou corrigés

J'ai écrit plus haut qu'une véritable inculturation présupposait une "*crise*" des valeurs existantes ou la découverte de l'existence du génie ou de la religiosité d'un peuple et comportait un effort d'adaptation pour compléter et corriger les points trouvés insuffisants à la lumière des valeurs du Royaume et des besoins réels de ce peuple. J'ai également souligné que le génie des pays bouddhistes n'était certainement pas exclusivement déterminé par le bouddhisme et ses valeurs. Quand nous abordons le "*côté négatif*" de l'inculturation, par conséquent, nous devons faire la distinction entre les déficiences dont beaucoup trouvent leur origine dans la religion bouddhiste et les défauts attribués à d'autres facteurs repris et adaptés par le bouddhisme. Les aspects négatifs de cette seconde catégorie sont, par exemple, la crainte des esprits mauvais. Pour la plupart, ils appartiennent à la religion autochtone traditionnelle et sont, par conséquent, supposés être la particularité de chaque peuple quoiqu'ils puissent montrer en fait un étonnant degré d'universalité. Ici, je voudrais traiter des aspects de la vie sur lesquels le travail missionnaire d'inculturation devrait spécialement insister parce que ces éléments ne sont pas suffisamment pris en compte par la religion bouddhiste dominante.

### 1. La vie communautaire

Pour ceux qui ont été témoins de la vie d'un village bouddhiste agricole, cela pourra paraître incroyable que je veuille décrire un bouddhisme insuffisamment adapté à la vie communautaire. Je crois pourtant que tout cela est profondément vrai. Tout d'abord et avant tout, la recherche de la lumière est essentiellement une aventure solitaire, un fait symbolisé par l'ancien slogan qu'on utilisait jadis pour quelqu'un engagé sur ce chemin et qu'on disait "*solitaire comme un rhinocéros*", bien que l'accent ait été, bien sûr, bien moindre pour des moines partis vivre ensemble dans des monastères fixes. Pour ce qui est des laïcs, chacun est rattaché à un temple et à ses moines qu'il soutient matériellement et de qui il reçoit la grâce du *dharma* (la doctrine de Bouddha),

mais les habitués d'un même temple ne sont pas nécessairement (horizontalement) liés les uns aux autres et ne se retrouvent jamais ensemble, excepté peut-être une fois dans l'année pour la fête du temple. Tout est différent, bien sûr, dans les villages ruraux où la "*communauté*" bouddhiste recouvre la communauté villageoise et où le temple sert de centre à la vie sociale du village. Mais cette superposition ne se retrouve pas longtemps dans les centres urbains modernes où les laïcs se sentent très vite seuls et, comme il arrive au Japon, affluent en masse vers les nouvelles religions qui leur offrent une communauté accueillante et une chance de participation active et de responsabilité. Ce manque de communauté et cette concentration unilatérale (verticale) sur le ou les moines est symbolisé dans les services liturgiques bouddhistes dans lesquels les croyants, dans la plus part des cas, forment un auditoire silencieux et passif devant des moines diserts et actifs.

La question est en fait de savoir si nous, chrétiens, faisons mieux, alors qu'une vraie communauté est certainement un des rêves du Christ. Mais, en plus, la communauté, intrinsèque au message chrétien, est certainement aussi le besoin premier des convertis dans tous les pays de mission et peut-être doublement encore en pays bouddhiste (beaucoup d'entre eux étant en plein processus d'industrialisation). Ce qui donne un exemple de ce que les bouddhistes peuvent vouloir imiter (et en fait ont déjà imité et développé) et la meilleure réponse aux besoins des gens dans nos sociétés modernes.

### 2. L'engagement social

C'est assez tard que le christianisme a pris pleinement conscience que travailler pour un monde meilleur (ou pour la promotion du Royaume) non seulement en aidant des individus dans le besoin mais aussi en s'engageant pour de meilleures structures sociales est une partie intrinsèque de la mission de la religion. Aujourd'hui, cependant, les documents romains et les études de la FABC prennent cette position de manière très explicite. Je ne citerai qu'un seul exemple, celui du document, déjà cité, du secrétariat pour les non-chrétiens qui compte l'engagement social "*parmi les éléments principaux de la réalité unique mais complexe et articulée*" de la mission : "*Il y a aussi l'engagement concret au service de l'humanité et dans toutes les formes d'activité pour le développement social ainsi que dans la lutte contre la pauvreté et les structures qui la produisent*" (Op. Cit., nr. 13).

A cause de circonstances historiques différentes mais aussi à cause de la nature différente de sa

religiosité, il est difficile au bouddhisme d'accepter l'action sociale comme partie intégrante de sa mission (Nous n'avons pas le temps d'aller plus loin dans ces raisons. J'ai essayé de les analyser dans *Inter-Religio*, nr.18 (1990), 45-53). On peut considérer comme providentiel, dans des pays bouddhistes, le rôle du christianisme de donner un exemple vigoureux d'engagement social, et, ainsi, amener les bouddhistes non seulement à changer leur attitude traditionnelle de passivité, mais aussi à découvrir dans leur propre tradition des motivations pour une action écologique et sociale. Je crois que le bénéfice serait double. D'une part, les attitudes bouddhistes deviendraient plus "évangéliques" et, d'autre part, l'action sociale chrétienne dans ces pays pourrait espérer devenir plus efficace. Le roc qui ne bouge guère devant une petite minorité chrétienne pourrait être renversé avec l'aide de la majorité bouddhiste.

Heureusement, cette influence chrétienne est devenue visible et quelque chose au sein du bouddhisme est déjà en train de bouger. Dans plusieurs pays bouddhistes, on peut trouver de petits groupes de "bouddhistes engagés". Mais ont du mal à faire suivre l'établissement bouddhiste, et à découvrir des soubassements doctrinaux bouddhistes de leur attitude pratique.

### 3. Une attitude critique par rapport à l'établissement social et politique

Ceci est évidemment intimement lié à ce que je viens de dire. A l'origine, la doctrine bouddhiste s'est fixée sur la transcendance du principe religieux (la "loi bouddhique") sur les principes profanes (la loi du roi). Cependant, dans plusieurs pays bouddhistes (le Japon inclus), l'établissement bouddhiste a oublié cette transcendance et s'est mis carrément au service de l'Etat. Pour justifier cette attitude pratique, grâce à laquelle on obtenait la protection du pouvoir politique, des théories telles que l'identification de la loi bouddhique à la loi du roi, ou celle "*des deux ailes du même oiseau*" deviendront dominantes. Dans chacun de ces cas, le bouddhisme a perdu une position à partir de laquelle il aurait pu avoir un regard critique sur les pouvoirs socio-politiques du jour, surtout quand le peuple en avait besoin.

Sur ce point, le christianisme, avec sa claire conscience de la transcendance de Dieu sur toute autre réalité de ce monde, apparaît comme étant appelé à aider les bouddhistes à reprendre l'idée de la transcendance de la loi bouddhique, et à reprendre conscience du devoir d'active résistance chaque fois que la loi du roi milite contre la justice et le bien du peuple.

### 4. Un salut intégral

Ici, je voudrais reprendre explicitement un thème qui est implicite dans les deux points précédents. En effet, l'engagement social des religions n'est pas nécessairement destiné seulement à la libération spirituelle finale du peuple, et le besoin d'avoir un regard critique n'est pas limité aux cas où le gouvernement opprime la religion ou enfreint la liberté religieuse des fidèles. En outre, s'il y a bien quelque chose que les histoires de miracles de l'Evangile nous enseignent, c'est que Jésus-Christ a pris très au sérieux les besoins matériels du peuple. En d'autres termes, son idée de salut était celle d'un salut intégral. Je ne sais pas ce qu'il en est dans d'autres pays bouddhistes, mais au Japon j'ai souvent été scandalisé par la manière dichotomique avec laquelle la théologie et la catéchèse bouddhistes traditionnelles parlent d'une part du besoin "réel" (spirituel) de libération, et d'autre part des besoins quotidiens, le plus souvent matériels, du peuple. Ces derniers sont classés sous la rubrique "bénéfices de ce monde" (*genze riyaku*) pour lesquels aucun bon bouddhiste n'est supposé prier. On parle beaucoup de la compassion du *bodhisattwa*, qui implique son "travail actif pour les autres" (*rita*), mais on ajoute aussitôt que c'est synonyme de "mener les autres à l'illumination" (*kyoke*).

Plus que dans d'autres pays, mais peut-être aussi dans d'autres pays, il pourrait être de la responsabilité de l'Eglise du Japon de manifester clairement par son activité pratique, par sa catéchèse sur l'amour du prochain, sur la prière etc., qu'elle croit fermement au salut intégral et que le peuple n'a pas besoin de recourir aux divinités mineures ou *shamans* pour être aidé dans ses besoins quotidiens.

### 5. Un regard international

Les événements récents du Sri Lanka (pays bouddhiste) et de Yougoslavie (pays à majorité chrétienne) sont là pour prouver, si tant est qu'il en est encore besoin, que le nationalisme ou l'égoïsme ethnique sont très profondément enracinés chez nous humains, et qu'ils peuvent être la cause d'une inhumanité et d'une misère innommables. Ces événements ont peut être aussi montré que la religion n'est pas encore arrivée à contrer efficacement l'égoïsme ethnique, et, tout au contraire, en est souvent devenue un élément actif. Est-ce que la religion aura plus de succès dans l'avenir quand les différentes religions se seront ajustées à l'attitude de dialogue les unes avec les autres, et quand d'autres facteurs d'internationalisation comme l'information, le

commerce etc. seront venus à la rescousse ? De toute façon, il ne fait aucun doute que ouvrir les coeurs des gens au-delà des limites étroites de l'identité nationale ou ethnique est une tâche importante de la religion.

A l'origine, le bouddhisme est une religion éminemment internationale. Dans sa doctrine, il ne reconnaît qu'une seule distinction entre les êtres humains : celle de leur plus ou moins grande proximité à l'illumination. Le bouddhisme par conséquent relativise totalement toutes les différences de naissance, de caste et de nationalité. Dans son histoire aussi il s'est montré capable de traverser toutes les frontières sociales et nationales d'Asie. Malheureusement, il semble que le bouddhisme ait perdu peu à peu ce dynamisme international dans un processus d'inculturation profonde dans l'ethos de chaque pays, en devenant la religion établie de ces pays. Le résultat en est que le bouddhisme apparaît aujourd'hui comme un conglomerat de bouddhismes nationaux plutôt qu'un même mouvement international.

Jusqu'à un certain point, quelque chose de similaire s'est produit avec le christianisme. Pourtant, le christianisme, spécialement dans sa variété catholique, semble avoir mieux préservé son caractère international. Par ailleurs, il est peut-être plus facile pour un groupe minoritaire de ne pas se fondre totalement dans les sentiments nationalistes de la majorité. Quoi qu'il en soit, la promotion d'une vision internationale apparaît comme un service important que nos Eglises minoritaires peuvent rendre aux pays bouddhistes. Une fois encore, toutes les activités ecclésiales qui vont dans cette direction ne porteront de fruits réels que si nous pouvons convaincre les bouddhismes de ces pays de retourner à leur vision internationale originelle. Pour cela, nous pouvons et nous devons, je crois, demander aux bouddhistes des différentes pays de collaborer davantage entre eux.

### 6. La Gloire de Dieu

Finalement, s'il y a une chose qui me manque beaucoup dans l'atmosphère religieuse bouddhiste, avec tous ses traits admirables, c'est le pathos de "*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*", ou pour le dire en termes islamiques, le "*Allahu Akbar*" - avec tout l'abandon, la louange et la jubilation gratuite qu'il implique. Mais les questions ici sont trop difficiles pour moi. Qu'est ce qui manque aux bouddhistes dans ce domaine aux yeux de Dieu ? Et comment pouvons-nous, chrétiens, peut-être avec l'aide des juifs et des musulmans, réellement témoigner de la majesté de Dieu Notre Père?

### III. Inculturation au Japon

A ce stade, il est déjà clair que l'espace ne me permettra pas de mener à terme mon intention de départ qui était de ramener les idées générales au niveau de la réalité concrète. Je vais devoir me limiter à parler de la situation japonaise en y étudiant quelques éléments de la question de l'inculturation auxquels nous n'avons pas prêté suffisamment d'attention au cours des pages précédentes.

Retournons d'abord à la question de l'esprit dans lequel la tâche d'inculturation et les modalités de cette inculturation doivent évidemment s'adapter à la nouvelle vision réaliste de la mission du christianisme au Japon. Dans cette perspective, on ne peut plus regarder l'inculturation comme "le moyen stratégique" d'amener tous les Japonais au sein de l'Eglise, le christianisme devenant ainsi toute la pâte, mais plutôt comme le nécessaire préalable pour faire en sorte que le message du Christ atteigne l'âme du peuple japonais et y agisse comme le levain dans la pâte du peuple japonais et de son esprit religieux.

Dans cette tâche, nous devons être animés par la forte conviction que le christianisme a besoin du Japon et que le Japon a également besoin du christianisme. Le christianisme a besoin de la sensibilité unique du peuple japonais pour une compréhension plus achevée de l'Evangile du Christ, et le Japon a besoin du christianisme parce que son peuple a des besoins religieux auxquels seul le christianisme peut répondre.

Notre premier travail est donc d'identifier les besoins religieux réels du peuple japonais, mais ceci se révèle très difficile. En ce qui me concerne, je ne suis pas prêt à produire une liste de besoins que nous devrions traiter par l'inculturation. J'ose tout de même affirmer que quelques suggestions précieuses pourraient être trouvées dans ce qui a été dit sur "*ces aspects de la vie qui ne sont pas suffisamment pris en compte par la religion bouddhiste dominante*". Incidemment, les six points ajoutés à cet endroit peuvent aussi être considérés comme une liste (pas complète loin de là) des points forts du christianisme traditionnel. Ceci nous amène à une réflexion importante.

Si l'objet de l'inculturation est de devenir un levain dans la pâte japonaise, répondant ainsi aux besoins réels du peuple japonais, il apparaît que l'inculturation du christianisme dans l'ethos japonais pourrait devenir un mauvais service rendu au Japon, si cela devait résulter dans l'affaiblissement de ces caractéristiques du



christianisme. Sur ce point, l'histoire du bouddhisme au Japon peut servir de signal d'alerte. On peut dire, je crois, que le bouddhisme au Japon doit son succès et sa prospérité à une complète "japonisation", une adaptation sans discernement au code culturel de base du Japon qui est que, par exemple, les religions doivent se soumettre à et se mettre au service de l'Etat japonais. Le résultat en est que la plupart des éléments stimulants et libérateurs du bouddhisme originel, tels que la supériorité de la "loi bouddhique" sur la "loi du roi", l'égalité de tous les êtres humains, l'amour bienveillant dû à tous les peuples au-delà de toutes les frontières, ont été abandonnés face au code éthique indigène fortement influencé par le confucianisme. On n'a pas permis à ces éléments d'exercer leur influence.

Ensuite, nous devons poser la question ; inculturation du christianisme dans quoi ? Nos premières réflexions sur le terme "pays bouddhiste" ont peut-être aidé à clarifier que, dans le cas du Japon, la réponse ne peut pas être simplement : inculturation dans la religiosité bouddhiste et ses valeurs. Le "code culturel de base" du Japon n'apparaît pas comme principalement formé par le bouddhisme, bien que l'influence bouddhiste ne puisse pas être sous-estimée. Il est plutôt formé par "l'esprit du shinto", influencé lui-même fortement en ce qui concerne l'éthique et les valeurs sociales, par le confucianisme. Le shintoïsme, cette religion "du sang et de la terre", s'est assuré que, même après 1 500 ans de forte influence bouddhiste, le peuple japonais continue largement de localiser le sacré principalement dans le "lien social" (les ancêtres) et dans la terre (*uji, furusato*, le Japon comme la terre des dieux, la terre dans laquelle son corps doit être enterré, non mutilé par donation d'organes).

La leçon immédiate à en tirer est que, parmi les nombreuses tâches d'inculturation, celles qui concernent le culte japonais des ancêtres et l'attitude japonaise vis-à-vis de l'Etat et de l'empereur sont les plus importantes et les plus délicates. Délicates car il y a en effet un danger réel, en s'adaptant à ces valeurs japonaises fondamentales, de s'y noyer et d'y perdre les valeurs chrétiennes propres, un peu comme le bouddhisme japonais a été "englouti" par le culte des ancêtres. Particulièrement dans le cas de l'Etat japonais, il faudra mettre l'accent sur l'aspect critique ou dialectique de l'inculturation, mais même dans le cas du culte des ancêtres (qui semble offrir des possibilités plus positives), l'Eglise devra se montrer prudente pour le cantonner à sa place propre, quelque chose comme la place faite à la vénération des saints.

Quelle doit donc être notre attitude vis-à-vis du bouddhisme dans cette complexe situation japonaise ? A quelle lumière le bouddhisme apparaît-il ici ? S'il est

vrai que le bouddhisme n'est pas l'élément principal de l'ethos japonais et ne peut donc être considéré comme la "cible" finale de l'inculturation chrétienne au Japon, il est vrai aussi, je crois, que le bouddhisme, dans la mesure où il était capable de garder vivant son esprit d'origine, a agi comme "un contre-courant culturel" positif. Parmi tous les ingrédients contenus dans la culture japonaise, c'est lui qui possède les semences les plus fortes pour donner naissance à une "vie spirituelle" au-delà des frontières des valeurs religieuses. La conclusion en est que le christianisme devrait considérer le bouddhisme au Japon non comme un ennemi mais comme un puissant allié. Il apparaît nécessaire que le christianisme japonais ne marche pas contre le bouddhisme mais de concert avec lui dans une symbiose de transformation mutuelle.

Quand nous parlons de rejoindre les besoins religieux du peuple japonais, nous le faisons en lui donnant une chance de découvrir son vrai moi (ou mieux, Dieu) au milieu des demandes de la production et de la consommation. Nous le faisons aussi en les aidant à une vision plus internationale, un amour plus universel, en les motivant à une action sociale et écologique au Japon et à l'étranger; en renforçant leurs défenses contre un nationalisme bigot toujours prêt à refaire surface; en fournissant un soutien spirituel à l'heure de la mort, et ainsi de suite. Il est clair que la seule action d'une poignée de chrétiens ne peut pas sauver le Japon. Notre action ne sera efficace que si nous parvenons à mobiliser le monde bouddhiste (spécialement les *obōsan*) pour qu'il collabore avec nous. En fait, cela arrive déjà, par exemple, en lien avec le Comité catholique Justice et paix, et avec la Caritas catholique, mais ces cas sont rares. Même si l'on parle en termes de "stratégie", nous ferions bien, je pense, d'appliquer le vieux slogan oecuménique à notre relation avec le bouddhisme : "*Ne faites jamais seuls ce que vous pouvez faire en collaboration avec d'autres*".

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John D'Mello

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## Paradigms for a Feminization of the Church

*To prepare for the International Women's Day (March 8th) we offer a paper by a Professor of Theology and Sociology at the Diocesan Seminary (St Pius College, Aarey Road, Goregaon East, Mumbai 400063) and National Ecclesiastical Advisor of the Catholic Women's Council of India (CCWI). The paper was presented at the FABC Conference on Women (BILA II), Pattaya, Thailand, 18 October 1998. Fr D'Mello offers five paradigms of feminism and opts for the solidarity paradigm as most appropriate for Asia. He then shows how it can operate in the Church at the level of the Bible, Theology and Liturgy and how it calls the Church to be involved in micromovements.*

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### I. Need for a Paradigm

In the year 1950, a year or two after the assassination of Gandhi, the whole of India was raving about Gandhian views and Gandhian ideals: the principle of village self-sufficiency, the principle of bread labour, *Swadeshi*, vegetarianism, simple living, etc. It was then that the President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, also caught up in this wave of Gandhism, decided to print all his correspondence on hand-made paper. Confiding this to Dr Kishore Mushroomwalla, the Director of the Gandhian Institute of studies, Dr Mushroomwalla advised him as follows: "Don't do this! In order to print on hand-made paper, you will have to buy special paper, special ink, special equipment and you will have to train a whole set of workers to use this machinery". "Instead", he said, "take off your brain and put on a Gandhian brain, put on a Gandhian way of thinking, a Gandhian mentality, and then perhaps all the principles and policies of Gandhi will flow automatically". In other words, take care of the vision, the paradigm: practical policies and implications will take care of themselves.

Much the same can be said of the phenomenon of the subordination of women and the difficulty of male-female partnerships within the Church. The real problem is the paradigm, the thinking, the mentality. *At the present time the paradigm, both in society and the Church, continues to be androcentric or patriarchal.* What we need is a widening of our horizons, a broadening of our understanding and vision. What we need is a "feminization of the Church" or, put more simply, we need a People of God with an increasing feminist consciousness. The term feminization of the Church might sound strange to some ears, even though today expressions like 'feminization of the work force' are quite popular. In this paper however by 'feminization' is not meant a Church with a "femi-

nine" face or a Church with feminine characteristics nor even a Church with a more "visible female presence" (just as previously for 2,000 years we had a masculine or male-dominated Church), but by 'feminization' is meant a process whereby the Church acquires an egalitarian, mutually respectful, cosmopolitan, cross-cultural consciousness. It is only then that there will be a true discipleship of equals and an end to all forms of discrimination, not just the discrimination based on gender. Only then will there be no more distinctions between Jew or Greek, slave or free person, male or female. Only then shall we attain the oneness in Jesus Christ (cf. Gal 3:28).

From the literature of the women's movement I can visualise five paradigms for such a feminization of the Church; all paradigms are heuristically constructed and none of them are strictly exclusive. Overlapping between them is quite possible.

### II. The Five Paradigms

The complementary paradigm: "Equal" but complementary

According to this paradigm, women are not the fairer sex, the weaker sex, but the complementary sex. Taking its cue from Genesis that God created human beings male and female, this paradigm shows that men need women just as much as women need men. They complement each other. This might sound nice in theory, but in practice such thinking leads to a two-nature anthropology, a vision of human beings as divided into two different kinds, each with identifiable differences that become normative for the sex (Mary Aquin O'Neill, "The Mystery of Being Human Together" in *Freeing Theology*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna, San Francisco: Harper, 1993 p. cit. 149). Thus males have a whole set of unique charac-

teristics and females have another whole set of complementary characteristics. Men are supposed to be, by nature, active, rational, wilful, assertive, aggressive, autonomous beings, whose direction goes outward into the world; while women are passive, intuitive, emotional, caring, compassionate, connected beings whose natural inclination is inward. This bipolar vision of the sexes leads to an equally bipolar understanding of their respective place, namely the world and the home (Elizabeth Janeway, *Man's World, Woman's Place*, New York: Del, 1971). Men are to go out and work, be the breadwinners; while household tasks are reserved for women — childcare and looking after the home (cf. *Laborem Exercens*, n. 19). In reality, men have decided the model and the roles in this model. Once the assignments are made, women are supposed to complement the role of men. “Woman,” they say, “is a companion for man!”

### **The equality paradigm: *Equal as sameness***

According to this paradigm, women demand equal rights or the same rights that men have previously appropriated. This is a paradigm that arose out of the early women's movement in Britain and the U.S., a movement which was associated with the right of franchise and the right to education. Thus, if previously men were allowed to vote, women should now be allowed to vote. If men are allowed to be Presidents, women too should have the right to be President. If men have a football team, women too ought to have the right to have their own football team. If men have a right to ordination, women should not be disallowed. In other words, for this group, women should have the “same” rights as men.

### **The sisterhood paradigm: *Equal but separate***

According to this thinking, women as a group must stick together and form their own sisterhood. Men find it hard to understand their problems, their experiences — so the only way is for women to come together and develop their own consciousness, their own models, their own strategies to defend their rights. Thus, women have spoken in terms of leaving the male-dominated Church and forming their own Church or having a separate Bible and a separate lectionary. Their point is that women need to have an exodus from the male-dominated Church (Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women Church: Theology and Practice*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988:57-9 and Denise Lardner Carmody, *Virtuous Woman*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992:125-30. It is to be emphasised that both authors do not really advocate separatism. They are only

speaking of “temporarily” or “methodologically” being apart) in order to experience their liberation, they need to stay apart from this Church, reflect on their experiences and theologise imaginatively to come up with their own symbols and expressions. Others feel that sisterhood groups are still not homogeneous in their thinking. There is no universal sisterhood. They point to several women who have absorbed androcentric values and cultures, for instance, mothers-in-law who continue to inflict violence on their daughters-in-law.

### **The Difference Paradigm: *Equal but different***

According to this paradigm, women are different from men, not just in their way of thinking, but even in their mode of being. There is an epistemological difference, which is based on an ontological difference. Women and men are not only different in their ways of thinking and acting but *in their very being*. Thus, there are different norms for men and for women. At present however the norms are decided by men while women are supposed to fit these norms. If they do not, they are considered to be inferior or inadequate. (Just as IQ measures are culturally based — youth from an urban culture are not more intelligent than youth from a rural background: their intelligence is *different*). For example, the standards of good health, the criteria of ‘wellness’ are framed according to male norms. Women naturally do not fit these norms, hence they are declared unwell or less than healthy. Descriptions of women as “often having headaches!” or ascribing most problems of women to their feminine state or caricaturing their problems as “being manufactured in the mind” are typical examples of modes of thinking which do not respect differences between the sexes. Feminists that hold fast to this ‘difference’ paradigm assert that women should develop their own norms and standards. This paradigm leads to plurality since the problems and issues of Third World women are quite different from those of First World women.

### **Solidarity Paradigm: *Equal but in solidarity***

This is a paradigm that arises typically from Asian cultures and encompasses elements from the other paradigms. In this paradigm the issues of women, peasants, workers, dalits, tribals and ecology are all connected. There is an interface and interaction between sexism, racism, casteism, colonialism, fundamentalism, environmental destruction and violence. Patriarchy is not just domination of females by males, by an entire socio-cultural-political system of graded

subjugations and dominations (Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "For Women in Men's Worlds: A Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation", *Concilium* 1984/n. 171,34). In this Asian paradigm, not only is the question of male domination, caste and class addressed in an integrated way, but the over-all question of the transformation of society is also addressed. Thus, the Asian paradigm is not just addressing the question of equal rights only, but envisaging a fundamentally different perspective on each and every issue and aspect of society (Gabriele Dietrich in "South Asian Feminist Theory and its Significance for Feminist Theology", in *Concilium* 1996/1,103). For instance, when Vandana Shiva conceptualises women's subsistence production she connects it with a spirituality of reconciliation with Mother Earth and, at the same time, makes a scathing criticism of Western science and technology as patriarchal and colonial. In other words, issues of feminism are connected with issues of consumerism and competitiveness (Vandana Shiva in *Staying Alive: India, Ecology and Survival in India*. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1988).

Further, feminist theology in South Asia finds itself in a situation where Christianity is a small minority religion. Hence feminist religion must contend with issues of fundamentalism and communalism. The question of violence must be dealt with in an integrated way which does not allow neat boundaries between domestic violence, public 'rowdiness', communal and caste violence and ethnic warfare. Violence must be analysed in all its interlinkages (Gabriele Dietrich, in "South Asian Feminist Theory and its Significance for Feminist Theology" in *Concilium* 1996/1:109). Feminism is not an autarchic entity but a way of thinking that develops connections between social forces and allows for the analysis of the linkages between class, caste, gender and race.

Having made a survey of the five paradigms, my next question is: which is the most appropriate paradigm for theological thinking in the Church? To arrive at my answer, I need to make a quick survey of the contemporary situation.

### III. Choosing a Paradigm: A Survey of the Contemporary Scene

At the present time economic globalization is spreading its tentacles in Asia relentlessly and with it come liberalisation and unbridled expansion of the market forces. The World Bank, IMF (International Monetary Fund) and WTO (World Trade Organisation) are extending their powers, and the 80-odd developing countries that have been forced to accept their

structural adjustment programme are experiencing two consequences:

- an ever widening gap between the wealthy and the marginalized,
- oppressive conditions for vulnerable sections of the population like women, children, the old and the unemployed.

Along with economic expansion there is also the globalization of culture. Fewer and fewer companies are controlling TV channels and the media. The world is experiencing a McDonaldization of culture, and by this I mean not the expansion of fast-food restaurants all over the world, but the bombardment of TV channels with values from a hegemonistic First World culture. The treatment of woman as a commodity is becoming universalized. At a more subtle level, we see the growth of the cosmetic industry with the parallel and associated rise of beauty competitions, where model/winners are more and more chosen from the developing countries to propagandize these products. At a more direct level, we are witnesses to continuous trafficking in young girls and growing violence against women.

A third alarming phenomenon of the present situation is the rise of fundamentalism. Fundamentalism with its increasingly centralizing and hierarchical form of control has tremendous negative repercussions for women and the egalitarian enterprise. The laws in Pakistan are an example, of which the 'blasphemy law' in particular is typical.

From this brief survey of the contemporary Asian scene we arrive at the conclusion that discriminating against women is linked to the discrimination of other marginalized groups, and therefore a feminist consciousness cannot be closed in on itself, but will necessarily broaden and encompass the perspectives of other oppressed groups in society. In other words, the optimal paradigm for Asian society is the solidarity paradigm.

### IV. The Solidarity Paradigm: Consequences for Theology and the Church

Given the fact that we wish to opt for a solidarity paradigm, how do we develop a theological consciousness that fosters this paradigm of feminization of the Church? How do we develop a feminist consciousness that is in solidarity with other powerless people? The first step would be a reinterpretation of Scripture, a re-fashioning of theology and a reconstruction of the Liturgy to include women's experiences and perspectives.

## A. Feminist Approaches to the Bible, Theology and Liturgy

### *Bible Interpretation*

The Bible offers images, symbols, stories and passages that inspire, motivate and influence. Unfortunately, there are also many images of women in the Bible which enhance models of women as submissive and subordinate, rather than as independent and assertive.

Feminist theologians, taking their cue from Liberation Theology, have developed a method of doing theology and interpreting the Bible. Schussler Fiorenza calls it a “critical liberation method” (Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, “For Women in Men’s Worlds: A Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation”, in *Concilium* 1984/n.171, 34-5). It starts with a woman’s experience of oppression from which a critique of the traditional interpretation is made. This is followed by the retrieval and recovery of woman’s histories and woman’s insights. The last step is imaginative reconstruction (Anne Carr in “The New Vision of Feminist Theology” in LaCugna (ed.), *Freeing Theology*, 9-13).

Thus Biblical scholars have *critiqued* the traditional construction of symbols and personages of the Bible and recovered for us new insights about these persons. One clear example is the traditional construction of the image of Mary Magdalene as prostitute and sinner. Feminist scholars have shown that she was, in fact, none of these things. It was Gregory the Great (540-604 CE) who mistakenly identified Mary Magdalene with the sinner in Lk 7:36-50 and with Mary of Bethany in Jn 12:1-8 and understood the seven devils of Lk 8:1-3 to be seven capital sins. As a result Mary Magdalene was cast into the role of Eve, sinner, weak woman, given to the flesh, given to crying, waster of perfume, temptress, prostitute, so as to more strongly contrast with her conversion patterned on the new Eve, pure, chaste, holy, forgiven much because she loved much. In many countries, Magdalene houses were opened to cater to the rehabilitation of repentant prostitutes. The story of the unknown woman in Mt (26:6-13) and Mk (14:3-9) is constructed merely as a story of conversion, repentance and forgiveness (John D’Mello in *Neythri (Women Leader)* August 1997, Bangalore: CCWI).

The research of feminist scholars has *uncovered* new insights about the unknown woman who anointed Jesus. They highlight her boldness and courage to gate-crash into a house full of men in a society where women were considered inferior. The earlier tradition also

failed to notice the fact that she is the first woman to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah (through the symbolic gesture of anointing with perfume) at a time when the other Apostles, including Peter, misunderstood or were openly sceptical of the nature of his messiahship. That is why Jesus gives her one of the greatest compliments he could give to any disciple: “Wherever the gospel is proclaimed... you will always be remembered”. As for Mary Magdalene, far from being a sinner or prostitute, she is one of the foremost woman disciples, a primary witness of both the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, or even more, the “Apostle to the Apostles” as the Eastern Church is still wont to venerate her (John D’Mello in *Neythri (Woman Leader)* March 1997, Bangalore: CCWI). Thus, feminist scholarship has recovered new symbols and archetypes of courage and discipleship for women.

### *Theology*

A second big area which can lead to the feminization of the Church is theology. A paradigm shift in theology is called for. At present most theology taught in seminaries and in lay theology courses tends to be androcentric or patriarchal in its assumptions. Most importantly, although women are allowed to study the Bible and theology, they are generally not appointed to teaching positions in theology in Catholic seminaries.

The critical liberative method has given us, for instance, a whole new understanding in Mariology. Mary is one of the powerful and popular symbols of Christian piety and spirituality. The three symbols of traditional Mariology have been that of virgin, mediatrix and the new Eve. Since Mary is the type and model for all disciples, these symbols have been used again and again to shape the Christian disciple’s notions of sexuality (as sexlessness and denigration of the body), of the subordinate position of woman and of woman as temptress (the old Eve in contrast to the new Eve). Theologians with ‘a feminist soul’ insist that we need to recover the image of Mary as a woman of independence and courage, symbol of motherhood and a sister in suffering and oppression (Maurice Hamington, *Hail Mary*. London: Routledge, 1995). Likewise, Rosemary Radford Ruether and others have pointed out the inadequacies of a patriarchal “kingly” Christology that stresses the “maleness” of Christ. She proposes “androgynous” and “spirit’ Christologies (Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, London: SCM; 1983). Fiorenza suggests that

a Christology that is silent about the socio-political causes of Jesus’ execution and

stylizes him as the paradigmatic sacrificial victim whose death was either willed by God or necessary to propitiate God continues the kyriarchal cycle of violence and victimization rather than empower believers for resisting or transforming it (Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Introduction" to *Violence against Women*, *Concilium*, 1994/1, xvi).

Feminist theologian Elizabeth Johnson illustrates how understanding Jesus as *Sophia* — the Wisdom of God — can be very enriching for Christology. *Sophia* is a feminine image that was very much in use in early Christianity. The term was used by Paul, John and implicitly by Matthew. It enables us to apply the rich Wisdom tradition to our understanding of Christ. The Wisdom tradition — which was very emphatic about justice, was respectful of other religions and cultures, and concerned about the entire universe — broadens our understanding of Christology and gives it a comprehensive and inclusive flavour (Elizabeth Johnson "Redeeming the Name of Christ" in LaCugna (ed.), *Freeing Theology*, 120-34).

### ***The Liturgy***

Another sphere that is important for building feminist consciousness is the sphere of the liturgy. The Church is an agency of socialization. Through its liturgies it shapes the values, ideals, norms and conscience of its disciples, especially the young.

Unfortunately the women's role in the liturgy is sidelined. I am not merely referring to the fact that women cannot be ordained or that many countries have not yet adopted the inclusive language lectionary, but I am referring to the 'shadow' role that women characters play in the lectionary readings and the portrait of women that appears therefrom.

In a study of the *Common Lectionary*, Marjorie Proctor Smith found only 14 per cent of significant references to women in the liturgical readings. Another 6 per cent were peripheral references. Women are included only in so far as they relate to male characters, not regarded as actors in their own right. Mostly they are expendable. For instance, while the Confession of Peter is read in all three years of the cycle in all synoptic parallels, the Messianic Anointing by a Woman found in Mt and Mk, at the beginning of the Passion, is read only once in three years, though it could just as appropriately be called a Confession of Jesus (Marjorie Proctor Smith, "Image of Women in the Lectionary", *Concilium*, Dec. 1985, 60).

It could be argued that women were not very visible or active in the Biblical era and the Bible simply

reflects this regrettable fact. But it is the function of a lectionary to be selective rather than representative. We need to recall and celebrate women of our biblical heritage in whom God has been made manifest and through whom God has worked: the stories of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, of Miriam and Deborah, of Jael and Judith, of Abigail, Vashti, Naomi and Ruth, of Shiprah and Puah, of the wise woman of Tekoa and of Huldah the prophet, of the women missionaries, leaders and disciples of the New Testament. We need to recall also "texts of terror" (Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1985) — stories of struggle, violence and suffering, stories of the rape, betrayal, abuse and murder of women which also belong to the biblical heritage. They are part and parcel of the stories of women of today. The secondary position that women characters play in the liturgy reinforces her secondary position in society.

### **B. Network Theology, Interdisciplinary Theology, Planetary Theology**

A second step in enhancing an egalitarian and cosmopolitan consciousness in the Church is to develop a broad-based theology. A feminist theology is not limited to women's interests and questions but is related to other theologies and the self-reflection of other oppressed groups. By insisting on the importance of 'wholeness' as a basic category in theology, feminist theology opens itself out to other streams of liberation theology. One might say feminist theology flows into "planetary theology" (Tissa Balasuriya, "Why Planetary Theology" in *Third World Liberation Theologies*, ed. Deane William Ferm, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990) — to use an expression coined by Tissa Balasuriya. Feminist theology becomes the starting point for other liberation theologies, for interdisciplinary theologies and for a network of contextualized theologies.

\* While Feminist theology liberates theology from androcentric assumptions and patriarchal thinking, and imaginatively reconstructs theology from a mutually respectful point of view. Ecological theology liberates theology from a humano-centric perspective (a perspective that views humans as the sole focus of theology) and reconstructs theology from a cosmocentric perspective (where the entire cosmos, including plants and animals, earth and oceans, become the focus of the theological viewpoint). When these two perspectives are combined, we have an *Eco-feminist Theology*, which not only combines the concerns of feminism with the concern of ecology based on

the striking parallels between the rape of the earth the rape of women, but reacquires feminist styles of living and thinking as the only means for preserving environmental sanity.

\* Again, inter-religious theology frees traditional theology from a narrow-minded vision which considers the Roman Catholic Church as “containing the fullness of truth” (the Church as identified with the Kingdom of God), pushing it to broader pluralistic horizons where truth is sought in other religions as well (the Kingdom of God is larger than the Church) thus enabling us to learn from other religious traditions. When this theology is combined on the inter-religious perspective, we develop *Religious Environmentalism* which focuses on an inter-religious perspective in preserving the environment, and is concerned with the symbols and stories that Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and other religions have to offer on the question of ecological preservation.

\* Likewise, Dalit, Minjung and similar theologies combine with feminist perspectives to produce other contextualized Third World theologies which liberate traditional theology from its First World, supposedly ‘universalistic’ viewpoint and construct theologies of struggle that celebrate the world views of oppressed, Third World women’s groups.

\* Moral Theology for a global world: Above all, the feminist solidarity perspective stimulates theology to take on a global character. This point can be elaborated with the example of moral theology. The solidarity paradigm provokes a radical recasting of the moral discourse. By insisting on ‘no separation’ between the personal and the political, feminist philosophy is pushing for a movement from an individualistic, casuistic type to a collective, communitarian form of ethics. It is asking that ethical discourse move from the private and personal sphere and include the public sphere of politics and economics. The ethical discourse has to be a critique of political and economic decisions and policies, an exercise in questioning the values behind them, since these are the policies affecting vulnerable groups like women.

At the present time ethics/moral theology is largely concerned with the actions, intentions and motives of individuals. There are schools of business ethics preoccupied with ethical decision making, wrong practice, behaviour and the morality of individuals. They

are scarcely concerned with the very structure of the company, its policies, its organizations of authority, its laws, the functioning of its board, its attitude towards workers, its expansionist tendencies. Focusing only on the actions and intentions of individuals is like a river flowing to the ocean carrying sewage water. One may plant a few trees along the river banks, one might make the route a little more scenic — but basically the river is left untouched and the dirty water flows as before (John D’Mello, “Towards the Promotion of Ethical Culture”, paper presented at the 1998 Copenhagen Conference on Social Progress, Denmark, 1998 (forthcoming publication by Danida: Copenhagen). The ethical discourse, instead of merely discussing the behaviour of individual executives and politicians, should focus on the very structure of multinational and transnational companies, the big financial institutions, the IMF, the WB and the WTO, their policies and the power controlling them.

The press is concerned about the lies that Clinton tells in his private life, but is not concerned with the lies that he may tell with regard to US interference in other countries. The world is concerned with the private morality of a US President, but it is scarcely concerned with the fact that the US is one of the biggest defaulters on its United Nations dues; and this *is* a moral issue affecting millions of vulnerable people including women.

Recently, in connection with the Intellectual Property Rights, the WTO passed a law on patents to defend the so-called ‘individual’ rights of discoverers and inventors. This is an iniquitous law. Take the patenting of ‘neem’ for example. For over 1,500 years Indian farmers and Indian women were using neem-based pesticides and medicines. Recently however, a few Japanese and American firms, one of which is W.R. Grace, have filed patents on formulae for neem-based solutions, emulsions and neem-based toothpaste. W.R. Grace has set about manufacturing and commercializing the product by establishing a base in India. As a result of India being forced to sign the IPR Treaty, under the WTO regime, Indian farmers and housewives have now to pay “royalties” to W.R. Grace for buying a product that they had been using for centuries (Vandana Shiva, “Science, Ecology and Human Rights” in *Human Wrongs*. Penang: Just World Trust, 1996, 155). The ethical issue at bottom is the structure of the IPR treaty. Individual ethics would find no fault with the IPR treaty, in fact, would encourage it; but a structural, communitarian ethics would reject it totally as being heavily biased against the poor housewives of developing countries.

Likewise the morality of environmental issues has

not been sufficiently dealt with in our moral theologies. The United Nations has ranked nations according to three indices: a per capita income index, a poverty line index and a human development index. Perhaps it also needs to come up with an ethical index, that concerns itself with women's rights, energy consumption and other Third World issues. Just as the IMF wishes to maintain report cards on those developing countries that are defaulting in their balance of payments, so also another agency needs to be empowered to keep track of the greenhouse gas emissions of transnational and developed countries. This is equally a moral issue, even though the moral agent in this regard is an institution. Thus, the feminist consciousness compels theology to become more global in its scope and problematic.

### **C. The Involvement of the Church in Micromovements**

Finally, a third step in the feminization of the Church would be the latter's increasing role as an agent of civil society. At the present time the spaces of civil society are being usurped by market forces or by the State. Churches, along with non-government organizations, have an important role to play in safeguarding the territory of civil society.

Following from this, an essential quality of Christian discipleship in today's world is to be part of a counter-cultural, micromovement. These are participatory people's movements that have come out of the struggles of peoples. These are not macro processes but often they are grassroots projects that are confined to a particular locality or a few villages. Sometimes they operate in several villages, multiply and involve large movements (Ponna Wignnaraja, "Rethinking Development and Democracy" in *New Social Movements in the South*, London: Zed Books, 1993). These movements have been attempting to better and enrich impoverished human relations, trying to turn the tide set by the process of globalization. Thus the fishermen's forum, the cooperatives, for landless labourers, the forum on violence against women, women against alcohol, anti-moneylenders groups, environmental organizations, women against dowry, youth groups, lawyers' collectives, judicial activists, etc. There are over 250,000 Non-Government Organizations in the world (Julie Fisher, *NGOs and the Political Development of the World*, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1998) and many of these agents of civil society (though not all) have been making quiet transformations in the interstitial spaces of society. Some have been openly campaigning against issues

and some have even started to influence the State and transnational organizations. These are people's movements. They are nondenominational, inter-religious movements. These micromovements are crucial for women's empowerment. The aim of the micro-movements is not to gain publicity, to capture power, or to be in the limelight, but only to bring about structures that are more just. These movements form part of the "dialogue of life and action". They are movements that are performing a veritable service to life. Many would call them signs of the action of the Holy Spirit. If the Church wishes to feminize itself — and by this I mean develop a mutually respectful consciousness — one sure way is to be part of the wave of micromovements that are slowly and gradually gaining momentum in the Two-Thirds World and are a powerful antidote to the evil effects of globalization.

In this post-modern society, feminization of the Church — or the development of an egalitarian, cosmopolitan, global consciousness — is not an option any more. It is a condition of survival that echoes the well-known maxim: "Think globally and act locally!"

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Serafina Ferreira de Alvarez

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## Main Basse sur les Terres Indigènes

*Pour respecter les promesses faites aux populations indigènes, l'État paraguayen a engagé et inscrit au budget des sommes considérables destinées à acheter les terres nécessaires et appropriées. Cependant, l'achat de ces terres effectué par l'Institut paraguayen de l'indigène (INDI) dans les années 1995-1997, a donné lieu à des spéculations qui se sont traduites par une énorme fraude : l'État - ainsi que le contribuable - a perdu son argent, les propriétaires terriens en ont gagné beaucoup et les indigènes, une fois de plus, sont frustrés dans leur droit à la terre. Article de Serafina Ferreira de Alvarez, paru dans ACCIÓN, novembre 1998 (Paraguay).*

*Le document que vous allez lire est un Rapport qui dénonce les spéculations réalisées par l'INDI. Il concerne les acquisitions de terres destinées aux peuples indigènes. Il révèle, comme on le verra, un grave cas de corruption commis au détriment de la population la plus démunie du Paraguay, et conçu au préjudice de tous les habitants, indigènes et non indigènes.*

*Le présent Rapport est basé sur une étude sérieuse et responsable réalisée par une équipe de chercheurs dirigée par Stephen W. Kidd et Mirta R. Pereira (assistante), sous les auspices de la Coordination nationale de la pastorale indigène et de l'ONG Terre Vive (Tierra Viva). Il couvre les années 1996-1997.*

*Dans cet article nous allons nous référer aux résultats de cette recherche dont le titre est Acquisition de terres par l'État paraguayen dans la région du Chaco, 1995-1997.*

*L'étude de la distribution de fonds pour l'achat de terres dans la région Orientale n'a pas encore été réalisée.*

### L'achat des terres indigènes

L'achat de terres de mauvaise qualité, à des prix exorbitants, dans des zones qu'aucun bénéficiaire ne revendique, sont des procédés couramment utilisés par l'INDI. Ils constituent quelques-unes des preuves les plus évidentes de la corruption régnant dans certaines sphères du gouvernement paraguayen et plus particulièrement au sein de l'organisme en question. Ces faits de corruption se nourrissent, en toute cruauté, de la vulnérabilité des populations indigènes, premiers habitants de ce pays qui s'autoproclame aujourd'hui "pluriculturel et multiethnique".

En octobre 1995, les "Entités indigénistes privées" envoyèrent une note à Milciades Rafael Casabianca, alors président du Parlement. Elle sollicitait la modification du projet de budget étudié par la commission mixte ad hoc, concernant la somme assignée par le ministère de l'économie pour légaliser les terres indigènes.

À cette occasion, les "entités privées" avaient présenté un tableau illustratif qui reprenait les dossiers présentés devant l'IBR et l'INDI. Il proposait le diagnostic le plus complet sur lequel l'INDI pouvait s'appuyer pour justifier une demande de financement afin d'entreprendre l'acquisition d'immeubles. Les "entités" avaient alors fait savoir que le tableau ne couvrirait pas la totalité des demandes ni celle des besoins en terres : il s'agissait de dossiers qu'on pouvait clore dès que les terres seraient payées.

En résumé, voici quelles étaient les terres susceptibles d'être achetées à des prix déjà calculés :

Les organisations indigènes avaient participé à cette campagne pour obtenir que le budget destiné à l'achat des terres soit augmenté. Les indigènes avaient réalisé des actions dont la plus remarquable fut une manifestation, devant le Parlement, de 400 personnes appartenant aux peuples Enxet, Toba Qom et Nivaclé, en octobre 1995.

En réponse à cette revendication, les représentants du Parlement promirent d'injecter 15 millions de dollars sur trois ans.

Le budget promis de 30 milliards 773 millions 565 000 guaranis pour les années 1996-1997 fut attribué.

### Des propriétaires largement indemnisés

C'est ce processus qui fut à l'origine d'une terrible spéculation dans les transactions d'achat de terres menées par l'INDI. Le gouvernement qui devait acheter des terres pour en faire, soi-disant, bénéficier les communautés indigènes, acheta en réalité des terres qui n'étaient pas celles que revendiquaient les communautés mais celles que les propriétaires, désireux de profiter de la manne libérée par le budget, avaient désignées.

L'INDI est sans aucun doute le principal responsable de cette situation ; en effet, alors que la loi 904/81 stipule que cet organisme doit travailler avec l'IBR lors de l'acquisition des terres, ce dernier fut exclu

des transactions chaque fois que les offres des propriétaires arrivaient avant les "réclamations" indigènes.

### **Au détriment des Indiens**

Nous allons à présent synthétiser les principales informations de cette étude en rappelant néanmoins - comme le souligne le document lui-même - qu'il ne s'agit que d'une première analyse qui sera développée et approfondie ultérieurement, compte tenu de la nécessité de mener une enquête plus large pour actualiser les informations et corriger ce qui devra l'être.

Dès 1995, la part correspondante à l'achat de terres dans le budget de l'INDI avait augmenté. Cette année là, elle mobilisait la somme de 5 millions de dollars, chiffre qui fut triplé l'année suivante pour s'élever à environ 15 millions de dollars. De même en 1997. Cette augmentation significative aurait pu répondre à une grande partie des réclamations de terres présentées à l'INDI. Cependant, jusqu'en septembre 1998, seuls 208 129 ha de terres réclamés à l'État avaient été pris en compte et attribués à des communautés indigènes.

Ce sont, dans presque tous les cas, des employés de l'INDI - indigènes et non indigènes, membres du Conseil de direction non qualifiés pour cette tâche - qui réalisèrent les inspections de terres, négligeant la participation de professionnels capables de réaliser des expertises sur les possibilités agro-écologiques et sur les conditions permettant d'évaluer si ces terres pouvaient être habitées par les indigènes. L'action menée contrevenait donc à la loi 904/81, qui exige une telle évaluation. Il existe des preuves que les rapports élaborés par ces "professionnels" pour que les terres en question soient tenues pour "aptes" au développement de l'habitat indigène contiennent de graves erreurs dues à l'incompétence de leurs rédacteurs.

Entre septembre 1994 et décembre 1997, l'État paraguayen a acheté 451 528 ha de terres. Dans 12 cas sur les 20 enregistrés, soit 60 % représentant un total de 269 399 ha, les propriétaires ont fait leurs offres avant que les communautés indigènes aient sollicité leurs parcelles. Pour légitimer ces achats, l'INDI procédait ainsi : après avoir négocié l'opération d'achat/vente avec le propriétaire, il se mettait en quête d'une communauté susceptible de présenter une demande officielle. C'est ainsi que des "leaders" indigènes ont été impliqués dans la mise en route de ces opérations.

Cette négociation s'explique de différentes façons dans la difficile situation socio-économique que connaissent les communautés indigènes. D'ailleurs, la période préélectorale que nous avons vécue avant le 10 août a incité certains leaders indigènes à entrer

dans le jeu des organismes publics ou du parti au pouvoir en se laissant manipuler par ces derniers.

Vint un moment où il ne fut plus possible de cacher la situation existante, et la position du président alors en exercice, Valentin Gamarra, devint intenable. Il fut démis de ses fonctions et refuse aujourd'hui de se présenter devant la justice.

Un des cas les plus parlants et les plus scandaleux est celui de Benito Galeano (journal ABC, 18 nov. 1997), qui avait offert sa terre à 12 dollars l'hectare alors qu'elle lui fut payée 120 dollars, c'est-à-dire dix fois plus qu'elle ne valait (2 706 165 dollars).

### **Deux fois volés**

Le concept de territoire dépend du sens que nous donnons à l'humain, à la terre, à la nature et à la relation entre ces éléments. De même, l'interaction et la signification de tous ces éléments définissent tant notre culture que celle des indigènes. Nous savons également que la culture indigène trouve ses racines dans la communauté et c'est pourquoi la terre est un bien collectif. Ne pas reconnaître aux indigènes leurs droits sur leur territoire, tout particulièrement sur le territoire des ancêtres, implique la destruction non seulement de leur culture, mais encore de leur organisation communautaire. En un mot, la destruction de leur vie.

Voici cinq cents ans que les premiers habitants de ces terres en ont été injustement spoliés et se sont, pour la majorité d'entre eux, retrouvés réduits en esclavage. L'actuelle fraude commise par l'INDI lors de l'achat de terres pour les communautés indigènes et la totale impunité dont les coupables bénéficient, signifient pour les indigènes une seconde spoliation de leurs terres, comme si la première n'avait pas suffi. Ces nouvelles violations sont nées en même temps que l'on reconnaissait aux premiers propriétaires leurs droits sur les terres de leurs ancêtres. Et le plus scandaleux est que ces violations, vols et fraudes sont camouflés sous couvert - et dans le cadre - d'une apparente légalité.

Souhaitons que cette enquête soit confiée à ceux de nos compatriotes qui se sont mis au service d'une nouvelle justice. Que l'on parvienne enfin à ce que la Constitution de 1992 a reconnu aux peuples indigènes : "Les peuples indigènes ont le droit de posséder la terre en quantité et en qualité suffisante pour qu'ils puissent conserver et développer leurs formes particulières de vie. L'État leur fournira gratuitement ces terres que nul ne pourra saisir, diviser, transférer, prescrire. Elles ne pourront ni servir de garantie pour des obligations contractuelles, ni être louées ; elles seront, également, exemptées de tout tribut." (Constitution nationale, chap. V, art. 64).

Laurenti Magesa

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## Africa's Struggle for Self-Definition During a Time of Globalization

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### Significance of naming one's reality

The nature of oppression and exploitation consists mainly in removing from the oppressed and exploited the ability to name themselves and their reality. In such situations the definition of who and what is exploited, is external, since it comes from the exploiter. The consequence of this is that the life and experience of the exploited and oppressed acquire legitimacy, indeed even existence, not from who one actually understands oneself to be, but from what one is made to be and do by external sources.

It is definitely not possible to consider the Africans' experience in history without taking into serious account this expropriation of their power and ability to name themselves. What else did the Slave Trade, slavery and the colonial experience do to them, but remove their ability to name themselves? Today neo-colonialism is doing the same thing in less crude, but nevertheless equally devastating ways in the form of economic, cultural, political and religious globalization. Not to consider this reality is to falsify African history and to bend contemporary African experience unwarrantably. When this reality is brought into the picture, it becomes obvious that a significant step in the process of African liberation and salvation is to regain the ability and power of self-definition by individuals and societies in all spheres of their life.

At the initial stage, it is immaterial whether or not such self-naming is *right* or *wrong* in the estimation of the observer. What matters at this stage is the ability to say with full conviction and confidence, "This is who I am. This is what affects me. My world is such and such". In light of this, it is helpful to examine the various means that African peoples are using in the struggle towards self-definition in the current situation of comprehensive globalization. It should be said right away that any sympathiser with the African effort for liberation will do everything possible to move this process forward, or at the very least, not stand in its way. Today, globalization more than anything else, defines the parameters of the struggle.

### Economic globalization: a tool for pauperisation

To put the struggle for self-definition into proper perspective, it is important to address the following question: In what way does globalization expropriate from the African the ability and power to name himself or herself? One may disagree with scientific materialism as a tenable social or ethical position, but it is not easy to deny or ignore the obvious deterministic effect of financial capital on the political, cultural and social life of all African societies. What propels the wheels of globalization today is primarily the economic factor. What this means is that before being political and cultural, globalization is first of all economic, even though resistance to it often takes the form of politics. In other words, economics in the form of liberal capitalism after the demise of doctrinaire socialism is currently the engine of the powerful movement to *uniformalize* the world.

The apostles of globalization in the economic sphere are well known. They include the omnipresent and omnipotent institutions and *agreements* such as the IMF, World Bank and GATT. Since they influence, or to put it more correctly, since they *control* the political and cultural life of Africa, they hold it hostage to their whims and desires. It is almost literally true to say that when the IMF sneezes, Africa shakes and when the World Bank frowns Africa trembles. The following are the conditionalities these institutions and *agreements* often unilaterally impose on African economies in spite of such conditions being invariably devastating in human terms:

#### (i) *Retrenchment of workers*

This leaves many people without employment and a means of livelihood. Education and health suffer as a direct result of this especially when perpetual debt servicing by African countries is added into the bargain. Besides social services, development projects that would uplift these nations also suffer thereby making the countries sink even deeper into debt; a glaring ex-

ample of a vicious circle.

(ii) *Opening up of Africa's markets to foreign goods*

This is imposed in the name of *free market* and *fair international competition*. It is no secret, however, that this is killing nascent local industries. Since when did a right-thinking judge set a dwarf against a giant in a cut-throat fight, and all in the name of *free and fair competition*? Were it not that human life is involved, it would be a ridiculous joke. As it is, the opening up of African markets unrestrictedly to foreign goods forestalls any sensible competition between the poor and the rich nations of the world, defeating the very purpose of capitalism — certainly capitalism *with a human face*. In the end, there is no competition, no free market, but merely exploitation and oppression of the weak by the strong.

(iii) *Aid: an instrument of globalization and pauperization of Africa*

It is argued that although millions of dollars are poured into Africa every year in the form of loans and grants-in-aid, by the developed countries of the North, there is little notable change in the majority of cases as far as economic development is concerned. Many aid agencies and Governments point to corruption as the culprit in all this. This is true, but it is only partly so. The real reason for the failure of aid to jump-start Africa's economies has mainly to do with the fact that the type of projects aided are often irrelevant to Africa's needs. The massive repatriation of the dividends of the aid in the form of material resources and personnel contributes to the failure of aid as a solution to Africa's economic development. Aid thus becomes not a solution, but part of the problem; a way of globalizing poverty.

As R. Cranford Pratt observed already more than a decade ago (Pratt 1983:55):

We claim to be a global village only in the same sense that the industrialised countries are able to reach out globally to find the resources they need and sell the products they manufacture. However, our world has neither the institutions of self-rule nor the sense of community and mutual responsibility the [positive] image of a global village suggests. Our world, dominated as it is by the nation-state system, with that system in turn dominated by the rich and powerful within it, has developed neither the will nor the institutions to ensure that global economic (and hence political and

cultural) independence operates with tolerable fairness.

**Political and cultural globalization: a source of alienation**

Lack of fair play as a constituent element of economic globalization determines, as I have already pointed out, the political and cultural orientation as well as the development of Africa in a very fundamental way. I shall illustrate each, by an example, in contemporary African politics, culture and religion (with special emphasis on Christianity) to show how economic globalization and oppression become political and cultural globalization and how these, in turn, bias Africans against themselves and their world. Writing on the situation brought about by the demise of doctrinaire socialism, Saral Sarkar observes (1991:369):

The only area in which capitalism is clearly victorious is in the political system. In contrast to the (formerly) AES (actually existing socialist) countries, where until recently there was little freedom and democracy, capitalist countries — not only the rich ones but also many in the Third World — have experienced a certain degree of freedom and free elections. We must not overvalue this fact. Of course, it has been a positive element in the life of the people concerned. But it has had little significance for other peoples. Freedom and democracy in the United States has not protected weaker peoples from aggression by democratic States. Democratically elected governments of the United States dropped atom bombs on the civilian population of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and perpetrated genocide in Vietnam. What humanity needs as a political system is much more than formal freedom and formal parliamentary multiparty democracy.

Most dictators and dictatorships in Africa's recent history have been sustained by powerful democratic countries of the North. We can cite as examples: Belgium in Rwanda; France, Belgium and the United States in Mobutu's Zaire and various Western Governments and transnational corporations in Amin's Uganda, Somalia, Sudan and Nigeria under the many military juntas. But this is not what democracy should be about. Democracy should primarily be a matter of how human beings relate on the basis of justice, respect and mutual concern. As I noted elsewhere (Magesa 1996:89):

Democracy in Africa should not be approached primarily as an idea or as a comparison between

types of parties or political organisations. Democracy in Africa ought to refer to, and be about, the majority of people's conditions of existence and how they can improve themselves. In concrete terms, democracy in Africa is that process that enables people to devise ways and means of resurrecting themselves from the tomb of subservience, exploitation, fear, poverty and illness. If the multiparty system does this best, well and good. But all energies should not be invested in issues of democracy that are really theoretical and secondary.

Instead of emphasizing human relationships of respect, justice and tolerance, the pressure that is currently brought to bear on Africa to democratise really stresses the theoretical and secondary, particularly, multipartyism. I do not wish to suggest, for a moment, that the multiparty system of politics is irrelevant for democracy in Africa. What I am saying is that this system alone does not guarantee a just orientation in society and that it must be combined with internal and external structures of justice for democracy to deserve the name. But, as it is now, the pressure for multipartyism in most African countries is alienating.

Most often, Africans are forced to copy systems of democracy which took the countries in question many long years of trial and error to adjust to their social and cultural environments. Africa is denied this necessary experience. Therefore, its effort to democratize lacks local content and thus tends to be alienating. Perhaps this has been the reason for the failure of a certain kind of democracy in many parts of the continent. Those countries that have attempted to be original in this endeavour have fared much better.

The most obvious evidence of alienation, however, is in the cultural sphere. Economic globalization brings with it the glitter of the West's consumer goods, attendant attitudes and behaviour. Electronics is a case in point. The video machine has affected everything among a big segment of the African population: from the attitude of shame attached to the black colour of one's skin and texture of one's hair, through sexual behaviour and even orientation, to the attitude towards one's elders and ancestors. What the TV/video has done in a decade to alienate Africa from itself is probably worse than what colonialism did in the same area in more than a century.

Once again, I am not suggesting for a moment that TV and the video machine are an enemy of Africa in an absolute sense, even in the specific area of culture. What I am saying is that it becomes an enemy when what is beamed on it, and consequently accepted as reality in Africa, has no African content;

does not, in fact, portray African reality. It is not possible to *imagine* that you are living and experiencing one reality while you are actually living and experiencing a different reality without being alienated.

### **Elements of globalization and alienation in Christianity**

Even today, Christians imagine that they are living one reality — that of the official (Western) teaching of the Church — while they are actually living another — that of African Religion. The problem is not that this situation is not known, but that the Church, in its globalizing endeavour, refuses to act and correct this condition of dual religious consciousness of which Robert J. Schreiter wrote (1985: 145):

In dual religious systems a people follows the religious practices of two distinct systems. The two systems are kept discrete; they can operate side by side. Sometimes one system is followed more faithfully than the other ... in other instances the two systems may be followed almost equally.... Conversion to Christianity has usually meant putting all other religious systems aside ... but ... significant parts or even the entirety of a second system is maintained.

Universal teaching, particularly on morals, is bound to lead people into dual religious consciousness. One thinks immediately of the recently issued, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, as a classic example of globalization in the religious sphere. How will the Church in Africa use this *Catechism*? As a stepping stone towards relevant catechism or as the ultimate goal? From present trends, one fears that the latter may be the case, thus further alienating African Christians from themselves and their basic religious environment.

Globalization under the Christian Church in Africa is as old as the missionary movement itself. It is deeply ingrained in the transplantation model of mission; a model which predominated until recently although today, theoretical *emphasis* is placed on the inculturation model. It must be stressed, however, that inculturation is still largely academic and does not touch the real world of those religiously oppressed by Christian globalization. Among these, as I fear the use of the *Catechism* will prove, the transplantation model unconsciously retains its strength.

### **Understanding history from the point of view of the oppressed**

*The Framework for the Study of Five Hundred Years of Colonial History from the Point of View of*

*the Colonised Peoples*, is the reality within which to situate the African perspective developed by the African and Asian Spirituality Consultation (AASC, 15th-24th July, 1994). The main objective, as the *Framework* states is:

The necessary task of reinterpreting history from the point of view of the oppressed of the South. This ... is done from a position of celebration of resistance and survival, amidst degradation. Our territories have certainly been conquered, and we have been subjected to repression. Amidst this repression we have retained [a measure of] our sense of dignity and self-respect (AASC: 12).

The aim of the exercise (AASC: 13) is specifically:

... to create space for the people of the South to express their anguish and anger at the dispossession and indignities they have been subjected to, and dialogue with the people of the North on the beginnings of a new relationship of equality.

The objectives, methodology to reach them, source materials for study and the issues that AASC puts forward can be summarised simply as the effort of the oppressed to define and name themselves and their environment. For this is principally what they have been dispossessed of since “Vasco da Gama reached India in May 1498”. According to the AASC:

During the last five centuries most histories have looked at these two continents (Africa and Asia) through the eyes of the colonising countries, or of the Missionary. After independence, history has been reinterpreted from the point of view of the national *élite* to whom power was transferred, in countries that received peaceful independence. But little has been done from the perspective of the subaltern classes — the oppressed castes, the indigenous populations, women, etc. The few studies done in this direction have been on specific issues. The attempt here is to look at the whole history of the last five centuries from the perspective of the oppressed who have been dispossessed and deprived of their livelihood and human dignity. They deserve to be compensated but are rarely, if ever, taken into consideration in studies and policy making. Moreover, most Asian and African countries have today fallen into the debt trap. Much as the North has made us debtors, we would like them to know that they owe us even more. They have got the benefits of colonialism and have attained a high standard of living, but the colonies continue to be underdeveloped. What the colonising countries owe to the former colo-

nies has not been quantified and adjusted against this debt, though the total would be much greater than this (AASC: 1 1-12).

This otherwise unduly long quotation can be easily justified. It is a clear and unambiguous expression of how the process of recapturing the ability of the South to define itself should proceed. It captures the need for self-naming which, in practical terms, involves the reappropriation of social, political and above all, economic rights of States in the international community. In 1947 a committee of the American National Catholic Welfare Conference proposed some of these rights and submitted them to the Commission of Human Rights of the United Nations Organization under Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. They include:

(i) The right of every State to exist free of political, military or economic aggression from any other State.

(ii) The right to “juridical equality with other States in the family of nations”.

(iii) The right “of access, *upon equal terms*, to the markets and raw materials of the world necessary for its own life as a people”.

They further include:

(i) The right to obtain from the international community redress of grievances arising from unjust treaties imposed by force.

(ii) The right to the revision of treaties which are no longer in accord with fundamental justice.

(iii) The right to maintain political, economic and social intercourse with other States *upon equal terms*.

(iv) The right to protect its own natural resources and economic life from unjust exploitation (CSG:87-88, emphasis added).

Poor peoples, nations and States want to look at history against rights such as these. But, in their case, have these rights been respected? Or are they respected only in the case of the rich and powerful nations and States of the North? Does the present process of social, political and economic globalization favour the practice of democracy in the international community whose objective is the welfare of human beings? With such questions in mind, the following description paints a clear picture of the situation the world is faced with:

Capitalism, in our time, is characterized by an in-

creasing *economic dictatorship*. This is not so noticeable in the concentration of wealth as in the accumulation of economic power in the hands of a small number of *men*, the trustees and managers of capital, dispensers of credit, which fulfils, in the economic organism, the function of blood in the human organism.

This concentration of economic power has been the natural outcome of an unbridled competition that has brought about its own ruin. Economic dictatorship gives rise in its turn to *ruthless political strife* in both national and international spheres (CSG: 74, emphasis added):

### African imagination

In his recent book, *Christianity and the African Imagination*, the Africanist Aylward Shorter asserts that:

Africans have a legitimate desire to reformulate the truths of faith in accordance with their own cultural forms of expression. They need not and should not replicate the intellectual history of Europe in order to understand what the Gospels says about Jesus (1996:21).

This constitutes Africa's imagination in the religious (Christian) sphere. It is an exercise in self-definition and naming. But it has parallels in the political and economic fields as well as in the social sphere. The African imagination must be put to work in the formulation and construction of democratic theories and institutions that are relevant to the cultural and political history of this continent. Ultimately, as F. Ochieng' Odhiambo (1997:18) has noted so well:

Real democracy has little to do with numbers, with the majority of people as such organized in a political party. Democracy in its ultimacy is a social-political system in which the State is (or the leaders are) interested in and concerned with ... the common good.

In the cultural sphere, the African imagination must valorize the continent's traditional cultural values which still govern and direct its peoples' life. Superficial imitation promoted by globalization and fostered by the modern means of mass communication, which in a fundamental sense alienates Africans from themselves, is an enemy of Africa, and must be seen as such. The African imagination must devise ways and means to counteract these and other alienating trends.

Fertility of the African imagination in the process of self-definition is especially required in the eco-

nomie field which, as I have tried to show, determines the other spheres. Economic imagination and the political will of African nations and States need to go hand in hand. Can the various States, separately, but especially together, muster the political will to assert their rights in the community of nations? This is what the African and Asian Spirituality Consultation proposes to do for Africa and Asia, and for the oppressed South generally.

### Conclusion

The poet Rudyard Kipling wrote:

*The toad beneath the harrow knows  
Exactly where each tooth-point goes.  
The butterfly upon the road  
Preaches contentment to that toad.*

Africa, Asia and the entire South know exactly the destructive effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism upon them. At the very least, they deserve to be listened to when they describe that suffering. Two reactions by those who inflicted the suffering in the first place are unwarranted: to *preach contentment* to the oppressed and exploited or to tell them that what they are describing is not what they are *really* experiencing!

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## COMING EVENTS

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### 5<sup>th</sup> symposium of SEDOS synod for Europe 1999

**12 October**

**6. Ms Mary Grey, Hampshire, United Kingdom**  
Specialist in Spirituality, Ecology and Women's Issues

#### **WOMEN AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION — RE-DISCOVERING THE HEART OF ECCLESIA**

**7. Fr Jean Joncheray, Paris, France**  
Vice-rector of the Institut Catholique, Paris

#### **L'EUROPE DE DEMAIN: TRANSFORMATION DANS LE PAYSAGE RELIGIEUX**

**7 December**

**8. Sr Grazyna Mech, FMM, Lubljana, Slovenia**  
Expert in youth work in Eastern Europe (University-Parish)

#### **LA JEUNESSE DANS LES PAYS DE L'EST: LE DÉFI D'UNE EXPÉRIENCE RELIGIEUSE DANS UNE SITUATION NOUVELLE**

**9. Dr Gerhard Kruip, Germany**  
Catholic Academy for Youth, Germany

#### **YOUTH AND CHRISTIAN FAITH IN WESTERN EUROPE — CRISIS, HOPES AND THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH**

### WORKING GROUPS

**Wednesday, 6 October** China Group 15:30 hrs at **SEDOS**

**Friday, 22 October** Mission in Conflict 15:30 hrs at **SEDOS**