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Editorial

Our December issue opens with a very informative contribution from Indonesia. Fr JOHN MANGKEY, General Counsellor of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC), who was invited to give a conference in Germany on the situation of the Church in Indonesia, sees the country going through a “multi-dimensional crisis”, which also presents some opportunities for the Church. He dwells on the different communal conflicts, studies the actors behind them and proposes some lines of possible contributions for the Church. –

In the last few days of September, the USCMA (United States Catholic Mission Association) held their Jubilee Mission Congress in Chicago. Fr RAYMOND J. FINCH, the Superior General of the Maryknoll Missionaries, was invited to speak at it and made an outstanding contribution. Starting with his own experience in Latin America, he reflects on the delicate balance between proclamation and witness. He concludes with a fundamental rule: “Authentic proclamation begins with the other”. –

While the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has shown concern at the increasing relativism in Christology in different documents over the last few years, Fr MICHAEL AMALADOSS, SJ, an Indian theologian, takes this debate as a welcome invitation and contributes a very informative reflection on a possible, theological understanding of the role of Jesus Christ as Saviour in the concert of the many religions.

Fr RAFAEL ARAGÓN, OP, writes about the challenges Religious life faces today in Nicaragua. Many years after the Sandinists Revolution, which meant a special challenge for all religious in a difficult moment. He thinks Religious life once again needs what he expresses in two terms: a renewed prophetic spirituality and a renewed historical reference important for any Christian spirituality.

We conclude the last issue of the year, as usual, with the Director’s Report to the Annual General Assembly, in which he briefly outlines the main activities and projects of the past year.

A special thanks again to Ms. PHILIPPA WOOLDRIDGE for compiling the Subject and Author Index of the 2000 bulletin.

*I take this opportunity to greet you all, as I bid you farewell after eight years of dialogue through this Bulletin and editorial. We are happy that the Dominicans have given us an excellent confrère to continue this service to you at SEDOS. We give a very **heartfelt welcome to Fr Bernard East, OP**, from Québec, Canada. We pray for him and wish him the Lord’s blessing for his work at SEDOS.*

***I thank you** for all the contacts during these eight years. Continue to be a faithful reader and writer for SEDOS. — Please see Fr Bernard’s biography on the right side of this page.*

News

Le nouveau Directeur du SEDOS se présente:

Permettez-moi de me présenter. Je suis le frère Bernard East, de l’Ordre des frères prêcheurs. Je suis né le 10 avril 1949, à Québec, au Canada.

J’ai fait profession dans l’Ordre de Saint-Dominique le 1er septembre 1971, et fus ordonné prêtre le 28 mai 1977. Après deux ans de ministère paroissial, je suis parti pour Rome afin d’y poursuivre mes études. J’y ai obtenu mon doctorat en théologie morale, de l’Accademia Alfonsiana, au début des années 80. Depuis ce temps j’ai toujours été professeur de théologie morale, soit à plein temps soit à temps partiel, au Collège Dominicain à Ottawa.

De 1985 – 1992, j’ai été l’Assistant du Maître de l’Ordre (à l’époque le frère Damian Byrne), spécialement responsable des provinces d’expression française, ainsi que des territoires qui dépendent de ces provinces.

Depuis, tout en poursuivant mon enseignement à temps partiel, j’ai exercé la fonction de prieur. Dix jours après être rentré de Rome, j’ai été élu prieur du couvent Notre Dame-de-Grâce, puis réélu pour un second mandat et d’octobre 1996 à octobre 1999 prieur du couvent Saint-Albert-le-Grand et professeur de théologie morale à Ottawa, au Collège Dominicain de Philosophie et de la Théologie.

D’octobre 1999 à octobre 2000, j’ai pu bénéficier d’une année sabbatique en Amérique Latine.

Au sein de la province dominicaine canadienne, à deux reprises, j’ai été membre du Conseil provincial, promoteur provincial de la formation permanente, promoteur provincial de Justice et Paix et membre de la Commission de la vie intellectuelle.

The Church in Indonesia: Facing New Challenges Towards a New Indonesia

The plurality of Indonesian society

Indonesia is a pluralistic society: multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious. A diversity of ethnic groups, cultures, customs, languages and religions exists in this vast archipelago of more than 13,000 islands. There are five religions: Islam (87%), Protestantism (7%), Catholicism (3%), Buddhism (2%), Hinduism (1%). The total population of Indonesia is around 210 million people.

This plurality is at times a reason for pride when a unity in diversity can be maintained. There are many local languages and dialects, but there is one unifying language for the whole country, called *Bahasa Indonesia* (the Indonesian language). This diversity has enriched the inclusiveness and openness of various regions. *Pancasila* (five pillars), the five guiding principles for the whole country (*belief in one God, unity, humanity, democracy and social justice for all*), has united the people in shaping one nation.

But at the same time this plurality is also prone to social problems and conflicts. Amidst this plurality a fragmented society has emerged, which is characterized by frictions in inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations.¹ *SARA* (*suku, agama, ras, antar golongan* = ethnicity, religion, race, inter-group relations) are the most sensitive issues behind the social problems. Ethnicity is sometimes used to incite a conflict and religion is used as a medium to divide the adherents of different religions. Ethnic and religious primordialism, which is the weak point in Indonesian society, is easily manipulated by sharpening primordial prejudices. This is aggravated by fanaticism (ethnic, political, religious), which sometimes becomes a source of problems and particularly in recent years it has tended to intensify. A series of violence since 1996 to the present has been closely related to political, ethnic and religious issues.

A multi-dimensional crisis

Unfortunately, in the era of the New Order of Suharto nation building, democracy and respect for human basic rights were abandoned. It strove to achieve high economic growth, but for political legitimacy only. In fact its economic policies only created fragile economic fundamentals, and the result was an economic growth in appearance only. The Asian

economic crisis in 1997 destroyed not only the Indonesian economy; it also opened up the hidden social, political and judicial fractures of the nation.

An in-depth analysis showed that this crisis situation was rooted in the system and structure of society and the practices that put aside human dignity and basic rights. *Firstly*, already since the beginning of the New Order the economy system was not taking sides with the interests of the people; the economic development tended to benefit certain government officials and business people/groups (conglomerates) to the detriment of ordinary people. The low morale of government officials and the politics of interest of certain groups have also played a major part in provoking such a crisis, as noticeable in the instrumentation of human persons and abuse of the structures and system. *Secondly*, in that system every party tried to gain benefits for itself, its own group or family. The consequences were *corruption, collusion and nepotism*, which grew wildly, and the unjust and fraudulent practices became a way of life. *Thirdly*, the exercise of State authority, which put priority on State stability and people's security, supported by a strong military domination, had resulted in sacrificing a great number of human lives, especially in the military operation areas, such as Aceh, West Papua/Irian Jaya, East Timor. Also kidnapping of pro-democracy activists by certain members of military Special Forces was used to silence those who might endanger the *status quo*. *Fourthly*, the reason why the majority of people, who were involved in various forms of violence (incidents related to SARA) were the grassroots people, seemed to be that they had been the main victims of marginalisation and displacement caused by development programmes. *Fifthly*, the fact that school education, which was carried out as an instrument of political control, with an orientation to (blind) obedience to conform to the will of the government, had failed to foster the formation of human values and of right conscience. *Sixthly*, the legal system was corrupt; it often did not side with the truth and justice but with the interests of the government, of conglomerates, e.g. for monopoly; money could also buy 'justice'.

This bad situation signals that society was infected by "*le mal modern*", the evils of the time, which had destroyed both social-political-economic systems/structures and human conscience. Human life had no

worth, others were considered mere instruments of one's profit and even the critics or the opponents were considered as a threat or problem to be "resolved".

This unfavourable situation culminated and exploded as a national crisis, which was triggered by the invasion of the headquarters of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Megawati Sukarnoputri, 27 July 1996, which then triggered a series of violence in many parts of Indonesia: Situbondo, Pasuruan, Tuban, Jember, Banyuwangi (East Java), Tasikmalaya (West Java), Solo (Central Java), Pontianak and Sambas (West Kalimantan), Medan (North Sumatra), Makassar, Luwu (South Sulawesi), Jakarta (Ketapang, May 1998 riots and the shooting of Trisakti university students and the Semanggi tragedy), Kupang (West Timor), Mataram (Lombok) and Poso (Central Sulawesi). In this series of turmoil the Chinese often became the targets and scapegoat. Besides, hundreds of churches were burned and destroyed. The monetary and economic crisis in 1997 aggravated the life of the Indonesian people and opened up a multi-dimensional crisis. This all led to the fall of Suharto from power. The role of the university students was significant.

This crisis was actually ingrained in one fundamental crisis, namely the moral crisis of the nation. Unfortunately, this crisis exploded in various forms of violence and society became very sensitive and reactive to issues related to SARA. This national crisis was also complicated by the East-Timor question, particularly before and after the referendum on August 1999. And in recent months terror such as bombings has also been used as a means of intimidating people and the new Government.

The 32 years of the Suharto autocratic régime also created a stigmatisation, which led to marginalisation.² This was expressly indicated in:

a). *Personal stigmatisation*: a person or a group was given a stigma, a bad name, a certain mark, e.g. those who were involved in the Communist Party. Their identity card was given a certain mark. They were later marginalised and became victims.

b). *Territorial stigmatisation*: people from certain territories got a bad mark. They were those who were conscious of their self-respect, of their rights and of the impoverishment of their environment. They were labelled as *GPK* (Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan = the Movement of Security Trouble Makers): GPK Aceh, GPK Irian Jaya, etc. They were also marginalized and unwanted and could be eliminated.

c). *Identical stigmatisation*: this relates to someone's identity. A Chinese was called a *non-pribumi* (*non-indigenous*), and so he/she belonged to a certain group. This was the beginning of his/her marginalisation. The Chinese people were marginalised

from political roles and positions, so they concentrated on business. They were then considered rich; they had money and were often extorted by those in power.

This New Order régime of Suharto's (now called "Old Indonesia") was noticeable in: 1) centralisation as a form of colonialisation of regions by central government, 2) militarism, 3) developmentalism, 4) destruction of environment, 5) conflict among the different elements of society, 6) intellectual impoverishment through education (cf. youth problems such as drugs and unqualified education), 7) discrimination and harassment against woman, 8) violation of law which led into chaos.

Against this background the Indonesian people are aspiring to move towards a "New Indonesia", characterised by: 1) regional autonomy, 2) civilised society, 3) nurturing social relationship, 4) sustainable environment, 5) different elements as an opportunity for unity in diversity, 6) education for formation of human values, 7) emancipation for all, 8) authoritative and well observed laws which promote justice.³

In other words, a New Indonesia, now aspired to by the Indonesian people, is an Indonesia which is human, civilised and just, which respects freedom, human rights, and which strives for justice and prosperity for all. These are the main challenges being faced by Indonesia today.

The change of government to President Wahid has opened up a new era of openness and democracy. A new consciousness of one's basic rights is growing, as well as a strong sense of freedom: freedom of speech without fear, free press, etc. There is a kind of euphoria of freedom, which can be seen as a reaction to the suppression, limitations and tight control of the Suharto régime. The parliament is now not reluctant to call the president to hold a debate on his policies, and open criticism of government officials by individuals or the press are not taboo any longer.

The Islam factor

In speaking of Indonesia it is indispensable to mention Islam, since Islam is the biggest religion in the country and Indonesia has the largest Muslims population in the world. A revival and a new awareness of being a majority has grown over the years, along with a demand to control the political, economical and religious areas.

There are two main Muslims organisations, which determine the existence and the influence of Islam in society: the *Nahdlatul Ulama*/NU (traditionalist — formerly led by Abdurrahman Wahid) and the *Muhammadiyah* (modernist — formerly led by Amin Rais). NU literally means "renaissance of Islamic scholars". It was established in 1926 by a group of *ulama* of East Java. The NU conserves and adopts

the Javanese tradition in their religious belief and practices. Its original constitution committed it to a range of religious, social and economic activities, in particular proselytising and the protection of traditionalist religious education.⁴ The authority of the *ulama* and the strength of the organisation are rooted in *pesantren* (religious boarding schools).⁵ It claims to have around 35 million followers. NU is tolerant and open to other religions and does not resort to fundamentalism or fanaticism. The *Muhammadiyah* was aimed at adapting Islam to modern Indonesian life and was founded in 1912 at Yogyakarta to counterbalance the development of Catholic and Protestant missions. It is now much involved in schools, hospitals, orphanages, boarding houses, with Islam as its ideological and moral basis. Its membership counts around 25 million people. To achieve these aims, it employed many methods of the Christian missionaries.

In the political sphere the Muslim population, mainly of these two organisations, proliferated into so many Islamic parties, which rose following the fall of Suharto from power in May 1998 and the transfer of power to B.J. Habibie, which heralded a new phase of Indonesia's history. Among the 48 contesting political parties in the 1999 general election around 20 were Islamic. There are at least two elements that identify a party as 'Islamic'. First, in their documentation, many such parties have officially adopted Islam as their ideological basis. Second, in some cases Islamic parties have retained Pancasila but, at the same time, employ Islamic symbols such as the star and crescent (*ka'bah*) or one of the other symbols widely associated with Islam. In addition, a number of 'Muslim' or at any rate 'Muslim-oriented' parties could also be considered 'Islamic'.⁶ The result of the election indicated that parties with a religious affiliation were not popular among the masses. The majority of the Muslim population preferred more nationalistically oriented parties, such as the Indonesian Democratic Party for Struggle and the Golongan Karya Party.

The Islamic parties, which adopt Islam as their ideological basis, could be included in what is called '*Islam Politik*' (Political Islam). They strive to influence every political orientation and decision with Islam aspirations in the government and parliament, and to revive *Piagam Jakarta* = the Jakarta Charter). They make every effort to include some elements of *syariah* into marriage law, patrimony law, alms law, education law, etc, and that these laws be adopted as national laws. They use Islam as a political commodity and ideology to attract their voters and followers. They are mainly represented by Islamic parties such as PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan), PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang), PDR (Partai Daulat Rakyat) in the parliament and hardline groups such as KISDI (Komite In-

donesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam), FPI (Front Pembela Islam).⁷

On the other side there is '*Islam Kultural*' (Cultural Islam). It was a result of Suharto's repression of Islamic politics. Muslims, whether they liked it or not, had to employ 'cultural Islam' in order to advance Islam and Muslim interests. The aim was to create an Islamic culture, environment and atmosphere to permeate society with Islamic values. They aimed at creating the so-called 'masyarakat madani' (civil society), which resembled the society of Madinah during the time of Mohammad. It was Nurcholish Madjid, a prominent Muslim scholar, who provided a strong impetus to the rise of 'cultural Islam' through his slogan, '*Islam yes, Islamic party no*'. The end result of 'cultural Islam' has been the renaissance of Islamic religion and culture in Indonesia. Among indicators are: the increase in the number of mosques, *madrasah* (Islamic schools) and *hajj* pilgrimages to Mecca. Others are the establishment of ICMI (the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals), Bank Muammalat Indonesia (the Islamic Bank), Islamic insurance (*takaful*) and the like since the early 1990's. ICMI, for instance, has played an important political role since its establishment in 1990, bringing Islam into the power centre in the last years of the Suharto era.⁸

The aspiration of certain Muslim groups, particularly the hardliners, to make Indonesia an official Islam country is no secret. When the founding fathers of Indonesia were preparing the birth of a new nation (1945) a heated debate emerged on whether to base Indonesia on a certain religious ideology or to be secular. But the main concern of the founding fathers was *the unity* of the diverse islands, cultures, ethnic groups and religions, and so a religious basis was rejected. But from time to time certain Muslim groups have tried over and over to revive '*Piagam Jakarta*' (the Jakarta Charter), which includes the following words: "*with the obligation to observe syariah law for its adherents*". They mean to add these words to the first principle of Pancasila: "To believe in one God" (= "To believe in one God with the obligation to observe syariah law for its adherents").

During the 32 years of Suharto's régime it was not allowed to discuss or to talk about the Jakarta Charter. It was a taboo. But in this era of reform and openness efforts to revive the Jakarta Charter have emerged again. Parties and groups such as PPP, PBB, PDR, KISDI, FPI have made public their intention to revive the discussion on the insertion of the Jakarta Charter into *Pancasila*. On the verge of the annual meeting of MPR (People's Consultative Assembly), 7-18 August 2000, there was a move of these groups to include in the agenda the discussion on *Piagam Jakarta*. On 7 August 2000 the first congress of

Mujahidin was concluded with a resolution called "Piagam Yogyakarta" (the Yogyakarta Charter) which obliges the observation of Islam *syariah* for all Muslims and rejects any ideology contrary to Islam. This has sparked a heated discussion and although the recent People's Consultative Assembly rejected the insertion of the Jakarta Charter into *Pancasila* but it has once again opened up a public debate on the issue.

It is to be noted that the stance of these hard-liners does not represent that of the Muslim majority. These groups want to give an impression of their hard-line stance and that they are fighting for the interests of Islam. Not only have they made the life of the non-Muslims difficult, but also that of the Muslims of good will by creating a bad image of Islam in Indonesia.

The communal conflicts, particularly in the Moluccas

The conflict in the Moluccas is not separated from conflicts in other regions. The invasion of the headquarters of the Indonesian Democratic Party in Jakarta on 27 July 1996, which killed a number of people, triggered other subsequent social unrest and violence in different regions, as mentioned above (p. 2).

Ambon, the provincial capital of the Moluccan Province, which was once considered peaceful and tolerant, had in fact kept the potentials of a great conflict. The migrants, mostly from South Sulawesi and Java of whom the majority were Muslims, became better off economically. While the indigenous Ambonese, mainly Protestants were left behind. This fact created an economic jealousy. In the meantime the government higher positions were shifting from the Protestant to the Muslim officials. This was also another reason for competition between the Christians *vis-à-vis* the Muslims.

Another factor, which helped create and easily provoke conflicts in the Moluccas, was the legacy of the colonial system of settlement of the inhabitants. In some areas the settlements or villages of the Christians were separated from those of the Muslims. In this way each group had created a 'ghetto' and not so much integration into daily life. So when the conflict started, the Muslim villages, whose inhabitants were mainly from other ethnic groups, would attack Christian villages and *vice versa*.

Ambon was once known as a Christian region with 60% Christians and 40% Muslims. But this has changed since the launching of the transmigration programme (moving people from other regions such as overpopulated Java – mainly Muslims – to other less populated regions). In these recent years the ratio of the population has reversed: out of the total population of Ambon 300.000 people, 55% were

Muslims and 45% were Christians of which 5% were Catholics, of about 2 million people of the total population of this Moluccan archipelago.

In the constellation of this archipelago of 1,000 islands a conflict related to SARA could be easily provoked. In a relatively short time all the main parts of the Moluccas were affected by social unrest. Besides Ambon, the northern part of the archipelago (Halmahera and its surroundings), where Christians were a minority, was also hit by disturbances and the Christians were wiped out of the region and were forced to move to other regions. In the central Moluccas Buru and Seram were also affected, as well as the south-eastern Moluccas such as the Kei Islands, Dobo in the Aru Islands and Tanimbar Islands, which counted a good proportion of Christians.

Similar patterns could be detected in other conflict-afflicted regions, such as in Poso, Central Sulawesi (last May-June) or Luwu, South Sulawesi most recently (last August) affected again by ethnic and religious conflicts.

The actors behind these conflicts

There has been a strong belief that the whole scenario was orchestrated and played from Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, by certain groups, for their personal and political ends. They are called '*auctores intellectuales*' and '*provocateurs*'. They do not hesitate to use the issues related to SARA as an instrument for their personal and political ends. The conflict in the Moluccas and in other regions normally started as a communal conflict, which manipulated ethnicity and religion for certain ends rather than as an inter-religious conflict. Religion was politicised.

a). Since Suharto's downfall in May 1998 riots and communal violence have increased. *The followers or the cronies of Suharto*, who are financially powerful, did not like to see him being blamed for the collapse of the country and being tried in court, which could also mean that they might share the same fate in the end. They wanted to maintain the *status quo* from which they had profited politically and economically. They wanted to see a country destabilised and the present government discredited. They were anxious to slow down reforms and apparently to prevent recriminations against those involved in political and human-rights abuses over the past three decades. They are also still present in government, parliament, business and military circles. Some of the former cabinet ministers, military generals and some business people were publicly mentioned as those involved in this conflict.⁹

b). Also, the military was divided between the reformists ("the red and white military"), those willing

to adapt to the demands of new reforms and those who want to maintain a *status quo* and are not content with the reduction of their socio-political function. Up to the time of Suharto's régime the military exercised a powerful "dual function": military and socio-political. Also within the military there are those who support the cause of hard-line Muslim groups ("the green military"). Now there is also talk about the progressive and the conservative groups within the military.

It was difficult to understand how the military was unable to prevent thousands of *Laskar Jihad* (Holy War troops) from Java from reaching the Moluccan Islands, although the president had ordered their departure to be blocked. There were strong allegations of partiality of certain military personnel in the field and of their help to facilitate the departure of these Jihad troops and the supply of guns and ammunition they carried along or that were sent to the Moluccas. They also became part of the problem. The minister of defence, Juwono Sudarsono was quoted as saying: "There are some, or even many members of the army, according to information gathered from both of the warring camps, who have become a major cause of the clashes."¹⁰ Also, the presence of the deserter-soldiers complicated the situation.

c). There are also *groups of fundamentalist and radical/hard-liner Muslims*. They want Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world but is not an official Muslim country, to become an Islamic Republic. They use this conflict situation to reinforce their aspiration to make Indonesia an official Muslim country. They do not like President Wahid, who is a tolerant man of dialogue who does not support their cause.

The unbalanced reports in the Muslim media have helped provoke a spirit of Jihad (Holy War) to defend their Muslim brethren, who according to these media were being exterminated by the Christians. After being trained in Java thousands of Jihad troops arrived last May in Ambon and Halmahera, equipped with standard and automatic weapons, and also with the intention to cleanse the Christians from the Moluccas. Their arrival has worsened the situation, which once was already calm, and their continuing presence has made the desire to end the conflict difficult.

"From the data obtained, it is clear that the Ambon affair has been masterminded from outside of Maluku with a view to 'ethnic cleansing' based on hate towards a CERTAIN RELIGION".¹¹ Semmy Waileruny, a lawyer, was quoted as saying: "Also, shady provocateurs have played a hand in creating the unrest... there was a co-ordinated campaign of attacks against Christians to drive them out of the once-idyllic Spice Islands... a pattern had begun to emerge

of Christians being driven out by Muslims... There are no more Christians in Ternate. This process of Islamisation is already happening. This is an effort to make an enemy of the Christian religion".¹²

"Analysts trying to make sense of the Moluccan violence, which has claimed more than 3,000 lives in the past 18 months, believe it represents a confluence of interests. These range from disaffected retired and serving military officers trying to stir the political pot in far-off Jakarta, to well-funded Muslim extremists seeking to capitalise on a shift in the demographic balance of a region that once had a clear Christian majority in an otherwise overwhelmingly Islamic nation".¹³

In an urgent appeal of 22 June 2000 the Crisis Centre of the Diocese of Amboina reported that "What is happening in the Moluccas now cannot possibly be called 'riots' or 'violence' or 'bloody conflict' or even 'war': this is an organized cold-blooded murdering of innocent people, conceded by the Moslems themselves by means of the loudspeakers of their mosques which call for annihilating all 'Christian infidels'. The violence can no longer be looked on as a conflict, but a straightforward endeavour to clear the Moluccas from everything that is Christian". In reality Christians were already wiped out from some areas in the northern Moluccas such as Ternate, Tidore, Morotai, Obi, Bacan, Sula, Buru. Ambon and other parts of the Moluccas have become killing-fields.

Although the situation seems to have improved, it is still very fragile. The enforcement of a civil state of emergency on 27 June 2000, followed by a limited isolation of the territory to prevent arms and ammunition smuggling, did not help much. Only the recently forced expulsion of a number of Jihad fighters and the confiscation of thousands of weapons, hand-made bombs and other sharp devices, along with the mounting pressure from the international community and governments, seemed to have helped ease the situation.

In the meantime the desire to end the conflict has grown. "The desire to end the conflict is more and more heard from both sides of the Christians and the Muslims. Many of the latter also wish the jihad warriors to leave the place as soon as possible. The police chief commander almost every day goes to meet either the Muslim or Christian communities, even as far as Masohi (the island of Seram). He declared on local TV that virtually nobody wants the conflict to go on. On the contrary, people wish to re-establish normal mutual relations, based on the traditional Moluccan *pela gandong* (brotherhood). A *Siwalima* reporter recounts that not seldom he can hear Muslims say: the Christians suffer because of what is done to them by the jihads; actually we, the local Muslims, equally endure much suffering from them".¹⁴

This prolonged conflict in the Moluccas and occasionally in other regions has caused a great loss of human life and done much material damage, and also has forced thousands of people to flee their homes and land, and became refugees. They fled the afflicted areas and sought safer shelters, for instance, in North Sulawesi, while others returned to their places of origin such as the South-Eastern Moluccas, South Sulawesi or Java. In turn, this unprecedented flow of refugees has created some grave problems, such as food, evacuation, new settlement, home, education, health, work, damaging psychological effects, etc.

The response of the Church of Indonesia

The concrete situation of society also determines the response of the Church. The joy and the hope, the suffering and anxieties of the people are also those of the Church. In response to the crisis situation the Church has stood up as a critical and moral voice, as expressed for instance in the Bishops' pastoral letters: *the Lenten Letter 1997* (just prior to the general election) in which the Bishops expressed their concerns on the crises which have intruded all levels of life, and were mainly rooted in moral decadence; *the 1999 Easter Letter* ("Risen and firm in hope") which was issued to respond to the ongoing moral crisis, with special mention of current issues such as the 1999 General Election, regional autonomy and special regions. In their *Moral and Political Call*, 12 August 1999 (prior to the Independence Day celebration, 17 August) the Bishops voiced their concerns and stance on the general situation of society and on the incidents in Aceh, Ambon and East-Timor. The annual assembly of the Bishops' Conference, November 1999, issued a pastoral exclamation "*Let Us Change*". It expresses the long crisis, which originally was triggered by the monetary and economic crisis, and a great need of change of attitude (*metanoia*); repentance and reconciliation based on hope in God. The Bishops beg the Church to carry out the Gospel by prioritising those who are victims and suffer from crises and to involve them in a movement which goes beyond the boundaries of religion and ethnicity.

Above all, in their Letters they speak of the defence of humanity, regardless of religious affiliation or ethnicity. This unfavourable situation has also deepened a great sense of solidarity among the faithful for all those who suffer from crises and conflicts. A crisis centre affiliated to the Bishops' Conference office was established.

It is significant also to note the shift of emphasis on the Church's stance and view: from a more sacramental and institutionalised Church, *ad intra* (an inward-looking), to a more *ad extra* (an outward-look-

ing) Church. The emphasis of a more *ad intra* Church is on sacramental services and well organised, well run institutions such as internal organisations, qualified schools, hospitals, media, etc. Until around 1990 the Church saw herself as a minority and did not intervene in the socio-political sphere or was very 'careful' to speak out on socio-political issues. In the words of the late Indonesian Cardinal Justinus Darmoyuwono: "We regard ourselves as 'an efficacious silence'". The influence of the Church was largely felt through the presence of her services in schools, hospitals, media, etc, and of a good number of lay people in the government departments. In this time an accusation emerged of a Christianisation of Indonesia by certain Muslim groups.

An *ad extra* Church is a prophetic Church, a moral voice in the society, and is involved in the cause of justice and peace, is open to and in dialogue and partnership with various components of society. *Solidarity* with the suffering, especially the victims of conflicts and violence has been generously demonstrated by the faithful by sharing what they can offer, by defending one's rights, by finding the truth and justice. In this time communication, dialogue and cooperation with other religions and other components of society such as NGOs has emerged as a major challenge to the Church. *Team of Volunteers for Humanity*, started by a Jesuit Father Sandyawan in cooperation with both Catholics and non-Catholics, is an example of common efforts not only to help the marginal people and the victims of violence but also to defend people's rights and to find truth and justice. The most difficult challenges come from Muslim hardliners, who are not open to dialogue.

Another aspect of being an *ad extra* Church is a shift from receiving to a missionary/sending Church empowered with a missionary zeal and thrust. It is then a challenge to local Churches to be missionary even within the vast Indonesia archipelago. In terms of personnel there is a good number of Indonesian religious sent abroad as missionaries, as well as in a number of religious congregations Indonesians have become part of general administrations. A still great challenge to the Church is to be financially self-sufficient, particularly in many local Churches, where the contribution of the people cannot fill in the pastoral needs in place, especially in the aftermath of the economic crisis.

Facing the present crisis of society the Church is expected to play a role of hope-giving to those in depressed situations, by seeking to resolve the conflict situation through reconciliation in a non-violent struggle for democracy, in defence of humanity and to change potential conflict into enriching and true brotherhood. Particularly the local Churches' role in mediating conflicts, in promoting justice and peace, in de-

fending humanity, such as in Ambon has become very significant. From the beginning the local Bishop, Bishop P.C. Mandagi, MSC, of Amboina, has acted as an acceptable mediator between the two fighting groups. This role has become more difficult since the Jihad troops arrived in different parts of the Moluccas. Catholic institutions also became the target of attacks and many Catholics became victims of clashes. The complexity of the solution of the conflict has forced him to lobby the international community and governments to help find a solution of the conflict. In July the Bishop, accompanied by other religious leaders, travelled to Europe and then to the United States for this purpose.

Looking forward to a new Indonesia the Indonesian Bishops envision a great need to built up the Indonesian Church as a *basic community, a communio*, with an emphasis on 'ad extram', meaning being a part of the society at large and in partnership, dialogue and communication with all the components of society. An honest dialogue and an open attitude towards other religions, particularly Islam as the main religion, are required, because the daily life of the Catholics is in the midst of them. Also the right pastoral approach, which includes analysis in the fields of culture, socio-politics, economics and religion, is necessary.

In order to express the Church as *communio* the Bishops have agreed to hold a Grand Catholic Gathering as the culmination of the 2000 Jubilee celebrations, at the beginning of November 2000. It will gather the representatives of the laity, religious, clergy from all the Dioceses of Indonesia, in communion with the Bishops. The theme of the gathering is "Empowering Basic Communities towards a New Indonesia". Empowering Christians of all walks of life can be a great contribution to the creation of a new Indonesia, that is peaceful, prosperous, built on true brotherhood and characterised by mutual understanding and acceptance, mutual appreciation and respect, justice, peace and honesty.

In order to empower basic communities the quality of human resources takes on great importance. Not only the formation of religious and priests but more important also that of lay people, particularly of youth, is indispensable. To be the salt and the light of the Indonesian world, to be prophetic, and in order to be present and influential in society, the Indonesian Church needs qualified lay people and pastoral agents such as catechists. They are in the forefront of the society. There are many lay people who could do further studies on various subjects, or who are available to follow formation courses, but often the main drawback is limited financial means. I believe that the future of the Church lies in the hands of lay people. Already from the beginning of the Catholic Church in

Indonesia the lay people have been the determining agents of evangelisation and growth of the Church. But facing the mounting challenges, as mentioned above, and those of this era of globalisation, which has been affecting Indonesian society as well, we need to build a prophetic Church with the ample and significant participation of qualified lay people.

The Church in Indonesia does not lack for challenges, but I believe that these are necessary for her further growth and maturity. The Church will continue to be present in society as a credible witness and as the sacrament of love, justice and peace, whatever the difficulties may be.

Notes:

¹ See William Chang, OFM Cap., "Menuju Indonesia Baru (Sebuah Tinjauan Kemasyarakatan)", in *Spektrum*, no. 1, XXVIII, 2000, p. 26.

² See I. Ismartono, SJ, "Sebuah Pengantar Pembicaraan Tentang Menuju Indonesia Baru", in *Spektrum*, no. 1, XXVIII, 2000, pp.14-16.

³ See I. Ismartono, SJ, *idem*.

⁴ See Suzaina Kadir, "Contested Visions of State and Society in Indonesian Islam: The Nahdlatul Ulama in Perspective", in *Indonesia in Transition: Social Aspects of Reformasi and Crisis*, ed. Chris Manning & Peter van Diermen, The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Iseas), Singapore, 2000, p. 322.

⁵ The NU controls 5742 *pesantren*, encompassing 4114 kindergartens, 780 junior high schools, 299 senior high schools, 19 universities and 26 other academic institutions.

⁶ Azyumardi Azra, *The Islamic Factor in Post-Soeharto Indonesia*, in *Indonesia in Transition: Social Aspects of Reformasi and Crisis*, ed. Chris Manning & Peter van Diermen, p. 310.

⁷ PPP = the United Development Party; PBB = the Moon and Star Party; PDR = the Popular Sovereignty Party; KISDI = The Indonesian Committee for Solidarity of the Islamic World; FPI = the Front of Islam defenders.

⁸ See Azyumardi Azra, *op.cit.* p. 313.

⁹ Cf. George J. Aditjondro, *Playing Political Football with Moluccan Lives*, in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 July 2000.

¹⁰ *The Jakarta Post*, 17 July 2000.

¹¹ *An Open letter of J.E. Sahetapy*, a member of parliament, dated Jakarta 21 July 2000.

¹² Quoted in Richard Mann, *A Nation Reborn*, Gateway Books, 2000, pp. 193-194.

¹³ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Hongkong, ed. 6 July 2000.

¹⁴ Update report from the Crisis Centre of the Diocese of Amboina, no. 37., 14 August 2000.

Ref.: Text from the author. Presented at the Annual Conference of *Kirche in Not/Ostpriesterhilfe*, Königstein, (Germany), 19 September 2000.

“Preach Always, When Necessary Use Words” (St Francis of Assisi)

Introduction

It is impossible to over emphasize the importance of mission as a source of life and vitality for the Church. The critical nature of mission is one thing that all Christians can agree on. Being sent, going out to others, going beyond ourselves and our borders, beyond our own interests and needs is at the heart of what it means to follow Christ and to be Church. The Second Vatican Council spoke of the Church as being, “missionary by its very nature” (*Ad Gentes*, n. 2). Carl Barth understood the very essence of Church to be found in “being sent and in building up itself for its mission” (Barth 1956: 725). Emile Brunner said it more succinctly when he explained that: “The Church exists by mission just as fire exists by burning”.

The scriptural warrants for mission continue to underpin the motivation for mission in this age and every other age:

“Venerate the Lord, that is, Christ in your hearts. Should anyone ask you the reason for this hope of yours be ever ready to reply, but speak gently and respectfully” (1 Pt 3:15-16).

“Full authority has been given to me both in heaven and on earth; go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world” (Mt 28:18-20).

Mission in the life of the Church

Mission is fundamental to the life of the Church and Proclamation is the “permanent priority of mission” (*RM*). The teaching of the *Magisterium* about mission and the central position of Proclamation in the wider context of mission, has been consistent and clear throughout the documents of the Second Vatican Council and right up to the Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999). Pope Paul VI’s Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) states that “Evangelization will always contain, as the foundation, centre, and at the same time, the summit of its dynamism — a clear Proclamation that, in Jesus Christ Salvation is offered to all people, as a gift of God’s grace and mercy”. *Ecclesia in Asia*, states that: “There can be no true Evangelization without the explicit Proclamation of Jesus as Lord” (n.19). The importance and crucial nature of Proclamation and

Catechesis are clear from the teaching of the *Magisterium*. At the same time there appears to be a hesitancy to give Proclamation the prominent place that it should occupy in the process of Evangelization.

When I think of Mission and of Proclamation in particular, I tend to focus on the New Testament passages that send us forth; I think of the words of the Great Commission. It is not often that I associate Proclamation with giving reason for the hope that is in my heart. I concentrate on the imperative to go out, to announce, to state publicly, and to make the Gospel Message known to the ends of the earth. In all charity, as Christians, we go out to share something that we feel is ours: our faith, our understanding of God, and our relationship with Jesus. We go out to share our faith with those who apparently lack faith. Over the years we have given a lot of attention to the content of what we share, but we have paid less attention to the manner in which we have done our sharing. At times the manner of our Proclamation and Catechesis has contradicted the content. This has resulted in a distorted model of mission, one that is similar to the image of a rich person giving bread to a beggar.

We go out and we share generously, but we share from our possessions, we share from a position of superiority. Given our reality and the context of our world as we begin this new millennium, a more appropriate image of mission might be that of one beggar sharing with other beggars where the bread can be found. In fact, we are as dependent on the bread as are those to whom we are sent. A point made by the late Missiologist from South Africa, David Bosch, in his well-known essay: “*The Vulnerability of Mission*”.

My personal experience

I began my missionary experience among the Aymara People in the Highlands (Altiplano) of Southern Peru in 1973, just a few years after the Second Vatican Council, and the landmark meeting of the Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellin, Colombia (1968). A few months earlier a large percentage of the participants at the last meeting sponsored by the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program (CICOP) called for a moratorium on sending more missionaries to Latin America. It was a time when some very respected thinkers were questioning the validity of mission. The Second Vatican Council created a new openness to and respect for the other Christian Churches, as well as for other world religions. The Social Sciences associated the missionary movement

with the colonial expansion from Western Europe. There was an awareness that the motivation for mission was at times more complex than a simply altruistic religious one. It was a time of doubt and questioning. Despite all of the ambiguity and questioning of mission, and especially of mission to Latin America, I still felt called to leave home and become a missionary among the indigenous Aymara People in Peru. From the beginning, my experience has been marked by a number of important dynamics, which have very much coloured my understanding of mission in general and Proclamation in particular.

I arrived in Peru at a moment when the missionary community was discovering the cultural and religious heritage and world-view of the Andean People. Previously their ancestral cultures were seen as lacking and deficient, not relevant to a 20th Century context. Aymara popular religiosity, which frequently mixed Christian and pre-Christian symbols in its rituals, was regarded as primitive, filled with superstitions, and even anti-Christian. Only after contemporary cultural anthropological studies began to challenge these views did a new awareness begin to take form. This enlightened assessment promoted a more sympathetic understanding of the so-called “primitive” cultures. Mission was no longer understood as bringing God into a void. Rather, the shift in perspective to one of discovery and mutual enrichment produced vast changes in the way mission was carried out.

The first Bishop I worked with in the Juli Prelature, Maryknoller Albert Koenigsknecht, recognized this new missionary shift. He explained that when he first arrived in Peru he felt that he was bringing God to the people, as if he had God in his suitcase. He said that he had since discovered that God arrived a long time before him, and that together with the Aymara, he was being led to discern and discover God’s presence in different aspects of the Aymara reality. The missionary relationship was no longer a one way street, giving from what I possess from my faith and knowledge to those who do not have faith or knowledge. The dynamic changed to that of a common search, to which we both contributed. The missionary gives, but also receives. Mission, Proclamation and Catechesis, which were previously seen as a one way street, suddenly became a part of a reciprocal, mutually enriching process. How many times have we heard missionaries say that they received more than they gave? That statement is not simply a courteous recognition of the worth or goodness of the people that we serve, it is a perceptive recognition of God’s presence as it unfolds in the human mystery among the people that we serve. It is a statement of a profound and living Faith.

From my very first moment in Latin America it was obvious to me that I stuck out; I was different from everyone else. In fact, I enjoyed a position of power. As a priest, I had received an education. Being born in the

United States I had economic resources and security far beyond those of the average Peruvian and far removed from the richest Aymara. Coming from a working class background in Brooklyn, New York, this was a new experience for me. The social prestige and power, which came with my position, helped to attract the attention of the people and even to get them to listen for awhile. At the same time, they turned around to do exactly as they pleased. They acted as they had in the centuries since the periods of Spanish conquest and colonization with a passive aggression that evaded my direct questions and resulted in a silent rejection of new possibilities. My position of power actually distanced me from the people that I was determined to serve. That, which seemed from one perspective to be an advantage, became a hindrance and a handicap. In this context, I asked myself if it would be possible to establish the trusting human relationships so essential for the authentic Proclamation of the Gospel.

I discovered that the only way that I could begin to relate on some type of equal footing with the people I hoped to serve, was to put myself in their territory; in the situations where they understood, where they had expertise, and where they were in control. The temptation was to limit contact to those situations where I was in control such as the parish, the town, or the local political reality based on power relations. The only way that mission and Proclamation of the Gospel could take place was by searching for situations where I became vulnerable, situations where I was not in charge or in control. The alternative seemed to be to settle for an artificial relationship of well-intentioned paternalism.

My experience among the Aymara led me to question if it is ever possible authentically to Proclaim the Gospel from any position of power, be that social, political, or economic power. I am almost afraid to answer my question because I fear the response. I read of the temptation in the desert where Satan offers Jesus “all this power and all this wealth” and I realize that it is not easy to say “no”. There is so much good that could be done.

Our Mission has changed

Mission has changed dramatically during the past 40 years since the Second Vatican Council. It has changed significantly in the 30 years since I began to work among the Aymara People in Peru. No longer is it simply a movement from the “first” or “developed” world to the “third” or “underdeveloped” world. Nor is it simply a movement from the so-called “Christian” to the “non-Christian” countries. It is a call to go beyond the boundaries of our Church and culture, and at times, even beyond the borders of our country. It is a call to participate in God’s Mission, to participate in bringing about God’s Reign. As Church, people can never look inward. “Church exists by Mission just as fire exists by burn-

ing". Today, we recognize that there are mission situations in the United States and Europe, as well as in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Every Christian is called to mission.

Another important difference during the second half of the 20th century is the self-questioning which has resulted in a notable and welcome decline in the arrogance, self-confidence and naïveté that frequently marked both Catholic and other Christian missionary efforts during the 19th and early 20th centuries. We have learned that good will is not enough. Even the best intentioned of the efforts of many missionaries have resulted in real harm to many of our brothers and sisters with whom we share life in our Global Village. We have discovered that the scientific, economic, political, social, religious and ecclesiological answers that we insistently offered to our "less developed" sisters and brothers were as riddled with contradictions and problems as the realities that they were intended to improve. Painfully we have become aware that much of what we proclaimed as Gospel was a very limited cultural understanding of that Gospel message. We discovered that we did not stand in a neutral place and impartially share the Gospel. We realized that our very words and actions often fostered and proclaimed Western values of efficiency, thrift and progress rather than God's love for the people and their inherent goodness.

The process of self-questioning that we have endured has been both difficult and distressing, but it has brought us to a new moment of truth. We have learned that Proclamation is more than simply winning others to our brand of religion, and we have discovered that we do not have all of the answers. In fact, our problem-solving approach, coming up with sure-fire answers before we entered into dialogue, actually got in the way of God's loving presence.

Pope John Paul II's missionary Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) gives us a clear statement of what Mission should be about today. It points to the importance of the five aspects of Mission: Proclamation and Catechesis, Dialogue, Witness, Human Development, Prayer and Liturgy. My intuition is that we are comfortable with all of the aspects of Mission that are pointed out in *Redemptoris Missio*, except for Proclamation and Catechesis.

Mission: Dialogue and Proclamation

Dialogue is seen as an integral part of Evangelization. In our postmodern Western World there is a cultural predisposition to both the need for and the importance of Dialogue. The need for Witness is clear and it is easy to see the importance of Witness in a cultural context where "actions speak louder than words". Human Liberation and Development have been a concern of the Church throughout the centuries, although

with different emphases and a sense of urgency that has varied. Today, in our world of contrasts and striking disparities and contradictions where the "rich get richer and the poor get poorer" this aspect of Evangelization is recognized as critical to the missionary task.

Proclamation and Catechesis on the other hand, are seen as if they were to constitute imposing our beliefs on others. There is a fear of imposing our beliefs: about God, about Catholic Doctrine, as well as our beliefs about personal and social morality. There is discomfort with promoting a role and function for religion that is in the public forum; a role that is not accepted in our pluralistic society as it is shaped by postmodern attitudes and thought patterns. If you choose to believe fine, but keep it to yourself runs the prevailing argument today. There is a suspicion that insistence on Proclamation will result in the same overconfidence and arrogance that provoked the self-questioning of the missionary project during the last 40 years. Yet, what are Evangelization and Mission about, if they are not about sharing our faith convictions and values, in short, if they are not about Proclamation and Catechesis? Mission is fundamental to the life of the Church and Proclamation is the "permanent priority of mission" (cf *RM*, n.1).

The objective of Proclamation and Catechesis is clearly stated in the Second Vatican Council: "That non-Christians be fully converted to the Lord under the action of the Holy Spirit who opens their hearts so that they may adhere to him (*Ad Gentes*, n.13)". Again, this is not simply winning others over to my brand of religion, but it is sharing with others the reason for our hope, entering into the Paschal Mystery and accompanying others as they embrace and reveal the new faces of Christ's life, death and Resurrection. It is one beggar sharing with other beggars the Bread that we all need and long for.

We have a tendency to see the five aspects of mission pointed to in *Redemptoris Missio* as distinct and even as antagonistic or contradictory. There is a tendency to order these aspects of Mission from the most important to the least important, from the first to the last in temporal sequence, or to place the different elements of Mission in opposition one to another. We speak of Proclamation vs. Dialogue, or Proclamation vs. Witness. In *Redemptoris Missio* the Holy Father insists on the complexity and the interconnected nature of all five aspects of mission.

Different elements of Mission

I would like to recommend that we look at the relationship that exists among the different elements of Mission or Evangelization in a new way. Instead of examining which of the elements is first or second, or positioning one element as more important than another, I would like to suggest that we consider each of the elements as part of a whole which cannot be sepa-

rated or considered separately. Because of our limited capacity, we need to examine each aspect of Mission separately, giving our attention to Proclamation at one moment and to Witness or Dialogue at another moment. Yet we must never lose sight of the organic whole that is Evangelization, which, like a person, is much more than the sum of its parts.

I would suggest that the presence of all five aspects of Mission is always necessary for authentic Evangelization. When we forget this organic unity we distort Evangelization and we place its authenticity at risk. It is not the case that some missionaries are called to witness while others are called to proclaim. Nor is it acceptable that at one moment Mission be characterized only as Proclamation or Dialogue, and later only as Liturgy or Human Liberation. Rather, authentic Proclamation is always rooted in a living Witness; it is carried out in a spirit of Dialogue; it leads to Human Liberation and it is in fact, conducive to contemplative and prayerful action. When we isolate any one of the aspects of Evangelization from the others, even if this separation is temporary and motivated by a desire to deepen our understanding, we chance confusing authentic Evangelization with something that does not quite hit the mark.

Having said that, and trying to hold the reality of the interconnectedness of all of the aspects of Mission in our awareness, we can examine the different dimensions of Proclamation a bit closer. When we speak of Proclamation as one aspect of Evangelization, I feel that the most appropriate quote from the New Testament to guide us is the one that we began with from the First Letter of Peter, "Venerate the Lord, that is, Christ in your hearts. Should anyone ask you the reason for this hope of yours be ever ready to reply, but speak gently and respectfully" (1 Pt 3:15-16).

The reason for our hope, the substance of our Proclamation and Catechesis, is our faith experience of God's saving action in our lives and in the world. It is the Good News about the coming of God's Reign, about the Cross, about the Paschal Mystery and about Jesus, the Risen One. It is the Good News about the assembly of believers, the Church, living out the Paschal Mystery at the service of God's Reign. It is the Good News about our collective experience of responding to the Mystery of Salvation in our midst over the past two thousand years. The substance of our Proclamation and Catechesis is both personal and social. We announce and proclaim that which we have begun to live as individuals and as a community, that which we hope to see brought to fulfillment in the fullness of time. The substance of our Proclamation and Catechesis exists both as orthodoxy and orthopraxis: "Preach always. When necessary use words". We recognize the importance of paying attention to the substance of our message, but that is not enough. The manner in which we make that message known is as important as the message itself.

"To speak gently and respectfully"

What does it mean today to speak gently and respectfully? Let us return to the observation, which I made earlier about the two images of mission. First, the image of the rich man giving bread away to poor beggars and the alternate image of a beggar sharing with other beggars. Theologically we have been clear that as Church, as the assembly of believers, we are to be about God's Mission, not our own. We have to be clear that it is God who saves the world, not us. At best we are merely instruments of God's grace at work in the world. Unfortunately, there have been too many times when we have allied ourselves with the powerful of this world and acted more like the sole proprietors of God's Reign, than as servants of the Gospel. Authentic Proclamation is always marked by attitudes of humility and service. There is no room or reason for any show of self-importance or arrogance on our part.

How can we ensure that our Proclamation is marked by an attitude of humility and service in our world today? Let us revisit the question of the relationship between power and authentic Evangelization that I raised earlier. It is not enough that the Cross and the Paschal Mystery be placed at the heart of our verbal Proclamation; they must also inform the manner of our Proclamation. I would like to suggest that authentic Proclamation is only possible when we, as individuals and as a Church, act from positions of vulnerability and weakness.

All missionaries experience vulnerability and weakness. We experience it as we confront dehumanizing poverty and situations of injustice and oppression. We experience it as we begin yet again in a new country or enter a new culture or learn a new language. The experience of vulnerability and weakness on an individual level is an intrinsic part of mission. All too frequently we have tried to escape this reality in the name of efficiency or expediency. It is uncomfortable, to say the least, to feel weak and vulnerable. At the same time, we realize that an authentic Proclamation of the Gospel and the Paschal Mystery will always be rooted in deeply experienced vulnerability and weakness, and in the rejection of false power and security.

As a Church we are called to be a blessing to society, but not necessarily to participate in the power structure of that society. The Church has flourished in situations where it has undergone suffering and thus fulfilled its mission of Proclamation from a position of weakness. We recall the foundations of the Church built on the sacrifice of the martyrs. More recently we have the examples of the Church in China and Vietnam. Our tendency and temptation is to move away from weakness and vulnerability toward power. That movement jeopardizes both the credibility and authenticity of our Proclamation.

The Gospels agree that Jesus launched his Procla-

mation of the Reign of God from Galilee, from a small provincial backwater area, from the periphery and margins of the society of his time. Not only did Jesus initiate the Proclamation of the Kingdom from the periphery, but also he addressed his Proclamation to the poor, the marginalized and the outcasts. Yes, Jesus ultimately arrived in Jerusalem reaching out to all segments of society, including the wealthy. He used the cultural and social infrastructure and the means of communication that were available. Significantly, he never allowed his Proclamation to be subverted by the structures of power, or to be distorted by the interests of the dominant political or religious groups of his time.

Inevitably, we must use the infrastructure and the means of communication available at particular moments in history. We are expected to take advantage of the opportunities that a particular system provides, whether that is the Roman or Spanish Empire, or the all-pervasive structures and networks of today's globalized world economy. Jesus did so during his time as did the Apostles during theirs. Paul was an expert on using the system to his advantage. It is critical that we insure that the Message we Proclaim never becomes subservient to the interests of those who dominate the political, economic or social infrastructures of our time.

The natural movement of the Gospel is from the periphery to the centre, from Galilee to Jerusalem and then to Rome. Are we able to heed the voices from the periphery today? Do we hear the cry of the poor and abandoned here at home: those without work, the homeless, and the illegal immigrants? Do we hear the voices of those who live on the margins of our globalized economy in Africa, Latin America and Asia: the street children, refugees, victims of AIDS, Indigenous groups, and other forgotten groups around the world today?

Another aspect of speaking "gently and respectfully" as pointed out in the 1984 Document from the Secretariat for Non-Christians, is that authentic Proclamation will always be dialogical. And I quote: "Before all else, dialogue is a manner of acting, an attitude; a spirit which guides one's conduct. It implies concern, respect and hospitality toward the other. It leaves room for the other person's identity, modes of expression and values. Dialogue is thus the norm and necessary manner of every form of Christian mission as well as every aspect of it whether one speaks of simple presence and witness, service or direct proclamation" (*Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission*, n. 836).

I would like to recall the observation that I mentioned earlier of Bishop Al Koenigsnecht about Proclamation being a two-way street. We give and we receive. We share our experience of God, and our faith, both as individuals and as Church; at the same time, we discover God present in the diverse realities, social situations and experiences of those to whom we are sent. Conversion and transformation are clearly the goals of

our Proclamation and our Catechesis, but not simply the conversion of those to whom we are sent. Through mission, in particular through Proclamation, God brings about our conversion and transformation, as well as the conversion and transformation of those to whom we are sent. Authentic Proclamation brings about the conversion of everyone involved.

Authentic Proclamation begins with the "Other"

As a dialogical process, authentic Proclamation begins with the "other". It begins with reaching out to and being present to the "other", who is different from me and who I cannot and must not attempt to recreate in my own image. Our experience, our expectations and our goals do not determine the starting point of this dialogue by themselves. Rather, the starting point is in the encounter itself, which is in fact an encounter with the sacredness of life. This is not simply a matter of a missionary strategy or a tactical manoeuvre. It is a theological imperative that flows out of our model of mission. We do not "bring" God to the missionary encounter, we witness to and proclaim our faith that God is already present, bringing about the Salvation of all peoples and cultures, and of every nation. The missionary task is to discern and discover God's presence and absence in this encounter; to discover and make known the new faces of the Paschal Mystery that are constantly being revealed.

Mission is the very life of the Church; "The Church exists by mission just as a flame exists by burning". It is in our self-giving, in our loving, in our reaching out to others with the message that today's world so desperately needs, that the Church comes into existence and points the way to God's Reign. This is what mission is about; this is what we must be about. This is what we hope to proclaim and teach. We have been given a very precious treasure, our faith, the reason for our hope. Yes it exists in very fragile earthen vessels. Even so, we are called to share it with all of our sisters and brothers at home and around the world.

Proclamation is the permanent priority of mission. But, if that Proclamation is to be authentic, it must always be thoroughly intertwined with witness, human liberation, dialogue and prayer. It must be authentic both in content and in style, marked by humility, vulnerability and a total rejection of false power and security. It must be a living out of as well as a verbal Proclamation of the Gospel. It is only, when we have learned to proclaim and explain, gently and respectfully, the reason for the hope in our heart, that we will be prepared to make disciples of all nations.

Preach always! When necessary use words.

Ref.: Text from the author.

Jésus Christ, le Seul Sauveur, et la Mission

Nous, chrétiens, affirmons que Jésus Christ est le seul sauveur. Nous croyons que toute personne humaine sauvée participe au mystère pascal du Christ d'une façon que Dieu connaît. En même temps, nous commençons également à accepter l'idée que les croyants des autres religions sont sauvés dans et par leur religion. En fait, ils n'ont pas de relation consciente à Jésus Christ. Quelques uns peuvent même consciemment prendre leurs distances par rapport à lui. Comment pouvons-nous réconcilier ces deux affirmations ? Cela a-t-il encore un sens d'affirmer que Jésus Christ est le seul sauveur ? La mission d'annoncer Jésus au monde est-elle encore valable ? Devrait-elle changer d'objectif si elle doit continuer ? Je n'ai pas l'intention de répondre à ces questions ici mais je voudrais attirer votre attention sur un certain nombre de réponses qui sont données aujourd'hui, ce qui vous permettra de fonder votre opinion.

Un parmi d'autres

Une réponse consiste à dire: étant donné que les autres religions sont aussi des médiations de la rencontre salvifique entre Dieu et l'homme, il n'est plus tenable d'affirmer que Jésus Christ est le seul sauveur. Il y a d'autres sauveurs. Les affirmations de l'Écriture concernant l'unicité de Jésus Christ comme sauveur ont été émises dans un contexte judéo-chrétien en référence à d'autres médiations telles que la loi et le culte juif. Elles doivent être réinterprétées à la lumière de notre expérience nouvelle des autres religions qui n'appartiennent pas à l'alliance judéo-chrétienne.

Une réponse analogue consiste à dire que *Dieu est le seul sauveur*. Le salut est le processus mystérieux de l'action permanente de Dieu dans la monde, à la recherche de l'homme. Nous rencontrons ce mystère en Jésus. D'autres personnes peuvent rencontrer le même mystère par l'intermédiaire d'autres noms et d'autres figures salvifiques.

Je pense que *ces deux types de réponses se contentent de supprimer l'un des pôles du dilemme*. Elles ne s'attaquent pas vraiment au problème. Le but de la mission est d'exhorter les gens par la parole et par l'exemple, en particulier la parole et l'exemple de Jésus, à se tourner vers Dieu et à répondre à son mystère tel qu'ils en font l'expérience

dans leur vie personnelle et dans leur tradition religieuse.

Une réponse a priori

L'ensemble des réponses traditionnelles adoptent une approche a priori. Elles tiennent ensemble les deux pôles du dilemme. Mais elles expliquent le premier de telle manière qu'il ne peut coexister que de façon malaisée avec l'autre. Leur explication dépend de leur tentative de comprendre *comment Jésus Christ sauve*. Elles en appellent à trois types de théories.

Quand la Parole de Dieu s'incarne en Jésus Christ, elle s'unit à l'humanité de telle façon que l'humanité toute entière participe au mystère pascal salvifique du Christ. Ainsi, tous sont radicalement sauvés par Jésus Christ bien que le salut puisse en fait être médiatisé par une autre figure salvifique ou même par un engagement séculier. C'est la théorie des Pères grecs et de Gaudium et Spes, souvent reprise par Jean Paul II.

Une autre théorie *se centre davantage sur la passion et la mort de Jésus Christ*. Il a racheté tous les êtres humains de leurs péchés. Les fruits de cette action salvifique peuvent passer par une multiplicité de médiations. C'est la réponse scolastique traditionnelle.

Une troisième théorie souligne *l'obéissance du second Adam qui répare la désobéissance du premier Adam*. Cette obéissance réconcilie et justifie. Et cette justification s'applique à toute l'humanité solidaire du second Adam. Cette tentative, plus moderne que la seconde, est mal à l'aise avec les relents de transaction de cette dernière.

Ces trois théories maintiennent que *tout être humain est radicalement sauvé ou racheté par Jésus Christ*. Mais les fruits de la rédemption sont communiqués de différentes manières, y compris à travers d'autres religions. Certains joignent le mystère de l'Église au mystère du Christ, de telle façon que l'Église est aussi considérée comme nécessaire au salut. Étant donné notre appréciation des autres religions, toute idée qu'un bon hindou serait un chrétien anonyme n'est pas acceptable. De toutes façons, ici, nous nous centrons non pas sur l'Église, mais sur Jésus Christ. Et l'Église a des problèmes de crédibilité qui font que des Indiens comme Gandhi diraient volontiers qu'ils sont disci-

ples de Jésus mais ne voudraient pas devenir membres de l'Église.

Difficultés du dialogue

Jusqu'ici, il n'y a pas de problème tant que nous affirmons que ceci est notre foi et que nous reconnaissons en même temps ne pas savoir comment ce salut atteint les membres des autres religions. *Gaudium et Spes*, au n° 22, dit simplement « d'une façon que Dieu connaît ».

En théologie, on joue avec des termes comme « la foi implicite » qui n'expliquent rien. Quelques-uns font aussi intervenir l'Esprit lorsque l'on ne peut parler de lien direct avec Jésus Christ, de sorte que Jésus Christ agit lui-même directement ou indirectement par l'Esprit. Je suis réservé sur une telle utilisation de l'Esprit et sur l'image de la Trinité qu'elle implique. Quoi qu'il en soit, cela passe dans une confession interne. D'autres religions ont des affirmations similaires. Dans la Bhagavad Gita, Krishna dit à Arjuna que, même si les gens adorent des dieux différents, tous leurs cultes arrivent jusqu'à lui parce qu'il est le seul vrai Dieu. L'islam croit que tout être humain naît musulman avant d'appartenir à d'autres religions par accident.

Le problème se pose quand il s'agit de proclamer sa conviction aux membres d'une autre religion sans les insulter. Plus grave encore, on ne les prend pas au sérieux, ni leur expérience religieuse. On a résolu le dilemme en en prenant pas au sérieux le second pôle. Tout ce que l'on peut dire aux autres croyants c'est qu'en croyant en Jésus, ils deviennent conscients de ce qui leur arrive vraiment et peut donc vivre le mystère consciemment. Leur religion n'est pas réelle. La réalité intérieure, cachée, de leur religion, c'est Jésus Christ. Cette attitude est encore plus insultante que l'attitude précédente qui reconnaissait des éléments bons et saints dans les autres religions ou les considérait comme imparfaits, en quête de perfection dans le christianisme. Bien sûr, on peut dire que nous devons regarder la vérité en face, même si elle est insultante.

Mais aujourd'hui, en reconnaissant que *les autres religions sont authentiquement médiatrices de la rencontre divino-humaine*, nous leur avons reconnu une réalité plus positive et indépendante que nous ne le faisons ici. On peut bien les appeler « voies extraordinaires », elles n'en sont pas moins *des voies de salut*. En incarnant la rencontre divino-humaine, toutes les religions, y compris le christianisme, sont limitées, humaines et même

pécheresses. Toutes ont leurs prophètes et sont appelées à se réformer. Cela n'en invalide pas leur capacité à faciliter la rencontre divino-humaine.

Je pense que c'est une question cruciale. Si les autres religions sont pour nous seulement des quêtes humaines de Dieu ou des structures dans lesquelles on ne peut découvrir que quelques éléments bons et saints, ou des développements inachevés qui sont invités à trouver leur achèvement dans l'Église, ou des communautés dans lesquelles Jésus Christ est actif par l'Esprit, nous pouvons arrêter là la discussion. Nous ne disons rien qui soit incompatible avec notre affirmation que tout salut est dans et par Jésus Christ. Il n'y a plus de problème à discuter.

Bien sûr, on dira qu'en mission nous devons présenter cette « vérité » avec douceur, en respectant la liberté de l'auditeur. Nous irons même jusqu'à dire aujourd'hui que nous devons le faire en « dialogue » avec l'autre. Mais il n'y a pas de compromis possible sur la vérité. Ce serait tellement bien si tous les humains devenaient conscients du mystère caché qu'ils vivent de fait. Mais l'important, c'est que le mystère est vécu. La conscience du mystère n'est pas essentielle au salut. Le fait que Dieu s'est fait homme en Jésus Christ est un élément essentiel du mystère dans le plan de Dieu. Mais cette intervention de Dieu n'est pas, de ce point de vue, signifiante pour l'Histoire puisque la majorité des gens n'en sont pas conscients.

Une christologie d'en haut

La christologie sous-jacente ici est une christologie alexandrine d'en haut. Fondamentalement, Jésus Christ est le seul sauveur parce qu'il est Dieu. Bien sûr, il s'est fait homme et est passé par le mystère pascal de sa passion, de sa mort et de sa résurrection. Mais le mystère principal est l'incarnation où il assume ce qu'il doit sauver et, ce faisant, le sauve. *Le problème avec cette image du Christ, c'est que l'humanité de Jésus et l'histoire ne sont pas prises au sérieux*. Les apôtres ont rencontré le Jésus humain. Prenant conscience de sa puissance salvifique, ils découvrent la puissance même de Dieu présente en lui car seul Dieu peut sauver. C'est la même réflexion qui conduit l'Église primitive à affirmer que Jésus Christ était humain et divin.

Mais la reconnaissance de la divinité en Jésus Christ semble avoir conduit les gens à diviniser l'humanité de Jésus, l'universalisant, l'absolutisant et lui enlevant son caractère historique ainsi qu'aux événements se rapportant

à lui. Il semble y avoir là un cercle vicieux. On passe de l'expérience de l'humanité à l'affirmation de la divinité. Puis, *au lieu de clarifier la relation entre les deux, on divinise pratiquement l'humanité au nom de l'unité de la personne*. Le concile de Calcédoine avait tenté d'élaborer un accord entre une christologie d'en haut et une christologie d'en bas, entre l'unité de la personne et la différence des natures. Mais l'accord a été brisé. Peut-être cela s'est-il fait très tôt dans la théologie occidentale.

Dans ce processus, une anthropologie et une philosophie particulières de l'histoire ont joué, qui n'ont pas été suffisamment examinées. Par exemple : une conception de l'histoire unilinéaire, une vision platonicienne de la création et de l'humanité, une compréhension juridique et transactionnelle de la rédemption, etc. Elles sont remises en question aujourd'hui. Des questions analogues ont surgi sur l'utilisation du langage. Si nous prenons Chalcedoine au sérieux, devrions-nous revoir la libre utilisation du principe de la « *communicatio idiomatum* », excepté lorsque nous le prenons de façon métaphorique ? De même, le langage symbolique que nous utilisons quand nous parlons de Dieu est-il interprété non seulement comme référence mais aussi comme représentation ? Certains historiens ont suggéré que, derrière les affirmations absolues et exclusives, peut se cacher une communauté défensive/agressive, prise dans un jeu de pouvoir.

Une solution qui n'aide guère

La conséquence d'une telle christologie d'en haut, a priori, semble être que les gens qui ne peuvent accepter une telle christologie d'en haut et les perspectives épistémologiques et philosophiques qui la sous-tendent, parce qu'elles semblent faire violence au Jésus de l'histoire, ceux-là les rejettent en bloc et ne considèrent Jésus que dans sa dimension humaine et historique, locale et relative. Bien sûr, Dieu est présent et actif en lui mais Dieu est aussi présent et actif dans les autres sauveurs des autres religions.

Du point de vue des autres religions, la solution proposée n'est pas satisfaisante non plus parce qu'elle est a priori ; elle ne respecte pas vraiment l'authenticité, l'identité et la qualité des autres religions et de leurs membres. Dans un contexte colonial, les gens ne se sont pas forcément insurgés contre cette façon condescendante de les percevoir. Aujourd'hui, ils exprimeront haut et fort leur ressentiment et leur protestation. Bien sûr, nous pouvons vivre et affirmer avec force notre

expérience de Dieu et en rendre témoignage. Mais nous n'avons aucun droit de parler a priori de l'expérience de Dieu des autres.

Un nouveau modèle

On dit souvent qu'avec le concile Vatican II, l'Église est entrée dans une nouvelle ère de son histoire et est devenue une Église mondiale. Un élément important de cette nouveauté est son expérience positive et son appréciation des autres religions. Je me demande si cette expérience nouvelle ne devrait pas conduire à un *nouveau paradigme* dans la réflexion théologique sur l'histoire du salut. Je pense qu'il n'est pas suffisant de continuer à réinterpréter les anciennes formules sans examiner les conceptions du monde et les modes de pensée qui leur ont donné naissance, ainsi que le langage symbolique qui a été utilisé. Il ne s'agit pas d'abandonner la tradition mais bien plutôt de se la réapproprier dans un nouveau contexte et de l'exprimer à nouveaux frais. Laissez-moi suggérer quelques éléments d'un tel modèle.

Le salut est un projet cosmique qui fait son chemin dans l'histoire selon le plan de Dieu. *Toute l'histoire est donc une histoire du salut*. Le salut ne concerne pas simplement les âmes individuelles. Il est social et cosmique. Le monde entier va vers une transformation. Dieu, le Verbe et l'Esprit sont à l'œuvre dans cette conduite de l'univers à son achèvement ultime quand Dieu sera tout en tous. Tout ce qui est créé est créé dans et par le Verbe. L'Esprit est également là dès le commencement, planant sur le chaos et le transformant en cosmos.

Dieu comme Sauveur

C'est toujours Dieu qui sauve. Nous avons fait l'expérience de Dieu comme Père, Fils et Esprit. Les religions ne sauvent pas. L'action salvifique de Dieu a lieu dans l'histoire de façon historique. C'est un processus qui ne sera achevé qu'au dernier jour. L'achèvement est donc pour l'avenir ; c'est la mission de Dieu. Dieu, le Verbe et l'Esprit agissent dans une multiplicité de peuples et d'événements. Cela ne veut pas dire que Dieu fait partout la même chose de la même façon. Nous n'avons pas à mesurer et à comparer les voies de Dieu en termes de plus ou de moins. Mais, puisque Dieu est un, nous croyons qu'*il y a un plan divin qui sous-tend et coordonne les diverses automanifestations de Dieu*. Tandis que le coordinateur est Dieu, la coordination elle-même peut se faire dans le jeu des différentes forces sociales et historiques en dialogue et en conflit au cours de

l'histoire. Nous sommes appelés à participer activement dans cette histoire.

Le rôle de Jésus

Au cours de la réalisation du plan de Dieu pour l'univers, le Verbe de Dieu s'est incarné en Jésus. Jésus ne vient pas avec un nouveau plan. Il vient pour achever le plan de Dieu sur l'univers. *L'intervention de Dieu en Jésus n'est pas exclusive tout en étant particulière.* Elle est ordonnée à conduire toutes choses à une communion cosmique. L'incarnation suppose que Dieu désire faire cela non pas de façon mystérieuse, a priori, mais de façon humaine, historique, dans l'histoire. Jésus lance donc un mouvement social qui devient l'Église et l'Église continue sa mission.

En vue de rassembler et de réconcilier toutes choses, elle entre en dialogue avec les autres. *Son but n'est pas de s'imposer mais de réaliser le plan de Dieu.* Elle a une vision de ce que le monde est appelé à devenir, le Royaume de Dieu. Tout en reconnaissant l'action dans les autres, à la fois en tant qu'individus et en tant que groupes religieux, culturels et humains, *elle offre les perspectives particulières et la voie de Jésus pour réaliser cette vision du Royaume.* C'est une voie d'amour et de service qui peut aller jusqu'à la mort, une voie qui comporte une option préférentielle pour les pauvres et les opprimés. L'expérience de Jésus ressuscité offre à l'Église une garantie et une espérance pour l'accomplissement de sa mission. Cette *bonne nouvelle* de Jésus a une *pertinence universelle mais non exclusive.* L'Église continue sa mission en proclamant, en incarnant et en accomplissant cette bonne nouvelle en dialogue et en collaboration avec la mission de Dieu dans l'univers, manifestée dans d'autres cultures et religions. L'Église est bien sûr heureuse d'accueillir les personnes qui se sentent appelées à devenir disciples de Jésus et à continuer sa mission.

Jésus n'est donc pas un nom parmi les nombreux noms qui se réfèrent au même et unique mystère de Dieu. Dieu est le même mais les chemins de son auto-manifestation et de son action sont divers. La voie de Jésus est certainement spéciale car nous croyons que c'est la voie du Verbe incarné. Nous croyons qu'elle a une place et un rôle particuliers dans l'histoire. Mais elle n'exclut ni ne remplace les autres voies. Nous sommes donc sans cesse appelés à exprimer la spécificité de la voie particulière de Dieu en Jésus Christ. Tout élection et tout charisme est un don de Dieu en vue du service.

Notre foi en Jésus Verbe incarné ne nous autorise pas à universaliser automatiquement le nom de Jésus

pour en faire le seul chemin. Dans le Verbe, Dieu a choisi d'entrer dans l'histoire d'une façon kénotique, en se vidant de soi, et d'agir de façon historique, s'assujettissant aux facteurs historiques de l'espace, du temps et de la culture. L'Église continue cet engagement historique. *Le mystère du Verbe n'enlève ni à Jésus ni à l'Église leur caractère concret et les limitations et conditionnements qui en découlent.* La résurrection de l'humanité de Jésus la rend éternelle mais elle ne la divinise pas ni ne l'universalise.

Réinterpréter la Tradition

Le premiers disciples prennent progressivement conscience que Dieu agit en Jésus de façon particulière.

Ils croient que Jésus est divin. L'une des raisons, sinon la principale, de croire que Jésus est divin est leur expérience de Jésus comme sauveur. Or, seul Dieu peut sauver. Comme ils ne souhaitent pas diviniser l'homme Jésus, ils préfèrent le voir comme le Verbe incarné, alors le principe de la « *communicatio idiomatum* » entre en jeu. Jésus est appelé le chemin, la vérité et la vie, le seul sauveur, etc.

Si nous prenons l'impératif de Calcédoine de ne pas séparer ni confondre le divin et l'humain dans le Verbe incarné, nous devons alors nous demander, en interprétant telle déclaration exclusive et universelle sur Jésus, si tel ou tel titre lui est attribué en tant qu'il est divin ou en tant qu'il est humain. On ne peut avoir recours à l'unité de la « *personne* » pour supprimer la distinction des « *natures* », ni dans la réalité ni dans le langage utilisé pour en parler.

Si nous ne confondons pas le divin et l'humain dans le Verbe incarné, *nous pouvons alors comprendre que l'action du Verbe Dieu dépasse l'action du Verbe dans sa forme incarnée.* Le Verbe est présent et actif partout où Dieu est présent et actif. Nous ne pouvons dire cela de l'humanité du Verbe sans la diviniser. Si nous sommes véritablement sensibles à l'unité de la Trinité, nous ne pouvons penser que Dieu agit par le Verbe incarné chez les chrétiens et par l'Esprit chez les autres croyants. Une telle division du travail entre les Personnes divines de la Trinité n'est pas acceptable. L'unité de la Trinité est beaucoup plus profonde et fondamentale que l'unité de la « *personne* » dans le Verbe incarné. Tout en étant très sensible à la présence et à l'action de l'Esprit de Dieu partout, je ne désire pas utiliser l'Esprit pour résoudre nos questions sur la manière dont Jésus agit chez les croyants des autres religions. Nous n'avons pas à faire intervenir la Trinité comme solution à nos problèmes de

christologie. D'autre part, le Verbe de Dieu est aussi actif que l'Esprit chez les croyants des autres religions. Nous croyons que le Verbe de Dieu s'est incarné en Jésus dans l'histoire en vue d'un projet particulier du plan de Dieu. Cela ne nous autorise pas à dire que Jésus est actif en tous lieux et en tous temps. Je pense que les gens sont conscients de cette difficulté. Et c'est pour cela qu'ils font intervenir l'Esprit tout en le qualifiant d'Esprit du Christ de façon à garder un lien avec Jésus. Je me demande si ce langage est vraiment adéquat.

Jésus, le seul Sauveur

Pouvons-nous encore parler de Jésus comme le seul sauveur ? Comme je l'ai suggéré plus haut, l'affirmation que Jésus est sauveur implique une théorie du *comment* il est sauveur. Je pense qu'il y a deux théories possibles. L'une dit : Jésus, par sa passion et sa mort, a fait réparation pour les péchés de toute l'humanité. C'est pourquoi nous pouvons dire ou bien que la grâce de Dieu peut atteindre tous ceux qui se tournent vers lui par la foi en Jésus, ou bien que les mérites de Jésus sont appliqués à tous, même si certains n'en sont pas conscients et appartiennent en fait à d'autres religions, rendant un culte à d'autres sauveurs.

Une autre théorie consiste à dire : l'amour salvifique de Dieu atteint tous les peuples. Quand nous disons que Jésus est le seul sauveur, nous affirmons en fait que Dieu, qui nous est présent dans le Verbe incarné, est le seul sauveur. *Jésus, en tant que divin, est le seul sauveur* car, seul, Dieu peut sauver. Nous affirmons d'autre part que l'incarnation est un élément essentiel du plan de salut de Dieu pour tous. Le salut est histoire et nous ne pouvons penser à cette histoire sans penser au rôle que Jésus y joue. Pour nous, Jésus n'est pas simplement l'une des nombreuses manifestations divines. Il n'est pas seulement un signe ou un nom que nous donnerions à l'action salvifique universelle de Dieu. *En tant que Verbe incarné, il a un rôle unique dans le plan de Dieu.* Les disciples du Christ en mission sont aujourd'hui les porteurs de ce rôle unique de Jésus. Il prend toujours une forme de service kénotique. Son plein impact ne sera connu qu'au dernier jour car même l'impact de Jésus dans l'histoire et sur les personnes va bien au-delà de l'action de ses disciples dans l'Église. Comme je l'ai déjà évoqué, il y a sans doute beaucoup de disciples de Jésus qui restent éloignés de l'Église.

Un nouveau paradigme pour la mission

Quoi qu'il en soit, nous pouvons partager notre

expérience de Jésus et sa bonne nouvelle de l'amour de Dieu pour nous sans attendre la solution de nos problèmes intellectuels concernant son identité. La mission n'est pas communication d'un credo mais partage de notre expérience de l'action de Dieu en Jésus. Le but de la mission était jadis de sauver des individus en les faisant entrer dans l'Église et en implantant celle-ci dans les différents lieux de la terre. Aujourd'hui, *on pense la mission en termes de construction du Royaume et l'Église comme son symbole et sa servante.*

Dans ce projet global et cosmique, nous sommes opposés aux forces de Satan et de Mammon, mais les autres religions et cultures ainsi que les autres croyants sont considérés comme des collaborateurs plutôt que des concurrents, en tous cas pas comme des ennemis. Le dialogue devient le chemin de la mission. Pour respecter la liberté de Dieu et des autres, la proclamation de notre expérience ne peut être que *dialogale*. Jésus a proclamé la bonne nouvelle du Royaume de Dieu et a appelé à la conversion à Dieu. Au cours de l'histoire, l'objet de la proclamation a lentement dérivé vers Jésus Christ et vers l'Église. On a même identifié le Royaume, Jésus et l'Église. Nous devons réexaminer la théorie du savoir et la métaphysique sous-jacentes à de telles identifications.

La mission de Dieu reste la source et la base de notre propre mission. Notre projet est prospectif et créateur d'un « ciel nouveau et d'une nouvelle terre », plutôt que conservateur. Nous croyons que Jésus a un rôle très spécial dans ce processus ; mais nous devons le mettre en évidence par nos paroles et nos actions au lieu de nous contenter d'affirmations métaphysiques a priori. Nous pouvons être des témoins enthousiastes du mystère que nous vivons sans émettre d'affirmations absolues. La tâche vraiment urgente de l'Église, c'est-à-dire de nous tous, c'est de devenir témoins crédibles de Jésus et du Royaume qu'il a proclamé.

Notes:

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Nicaragua — Experience of Religious Life

I was asked to prepare a reflection and present some aspects of the reality of religious life in our country for the XXXIII Meeting of the CLAR Board of Directors in November 1999 in Nicaragua. The invitation came after a meeting of theologians with a group of religious, who frankly shared their opinions on the country and the Church. The theologians were deeply concerned by what they heard, what they saw in visits to different areas and in their personal dialogues with many of us. This marked the spirit of the event.

Introduction

There are two aspects that synthesize the problem at hand. First, there is the isolation, marginalization and even lack of understanding of religious life by different ecclesial authorities in the country. Religious men and women, particularly those living in inserted communities, feel unprotected, alone and even isolated from the ecclesial surroundings. There has been no lack of complaints, not only about our pastors but also about CLAR, which was once close and in solidarity with us, but which has grown distant. Second, there is what we can call the “dark night”, the lack of utopian and hopeful horizons that is common today among religious and felt very strongly among us.

Nicaragua was a paradigmatic reference for many religious and Church people because of the possibility of carrying out a project that united the utopia of the Kingdom with a concrete process in our history. “This is what we lived and what we dreamed and we gave ourselves to it with such intensity that it seemed like we were touching heaven”, some religious said. Today, Nicaragua is the poorest country on the continent, suffering economic, social, human and, above all, moral setbacks. Nicaraguan reality today may be where human weakness, sin in all its expressions, the force of evil, is manifested most clearly. This is not only seen in the force of the powers that be in the world, which drown the dreams of the poor by blocking their historic process and confronting them with a fratricidal war, but also within us and in the deterioration of leaders, who once risked their lives for the poor and are now seduced by power and dragged down by their interests. Unhappiness is not a product of nostalgia for the past but is produced by direct contact with human weakness, which makes us distance ourselves from the past and recognize our own limits.

Starting from these contradictions, the drama of life invites us to think we are not only heirs to grace but also the first transgression of God’s will and that we all take part in this first disobedience of human nature.

Plural manifestations of religious life

This way of seeing and judging reality is not common among all the religious in the country. It is expressed in different forms and in different experiences. In our reflection, we refer more to this sector of consecrated life which, inspired by the Council renewal, opened itself to a process of constantly updating its charismas and being faithful to the Gospel and the signs of the times in the Latin American Catholic Church.

It is common to hear that we are in a time of crisis and in Nicaragua we are living this with even greater intensity because of the country’s historic connotations. The word “post” is generally applied after a conflict (wars or natural disasters) or an important event in the history of a people that profoundly affects their lives and structure of the nation. The “post” period is normally one of great difficulties, enormous challenges and new possibilities. “History shows us that the majority of times peoples are divided (by internal conflicts, scarce resources, foreign intervention) into opposing groups, which leads to a hardening of contradicting positions. In the end, the wealthier sector tends to win with a more pragmatic solution. This appears to be our situation in Nicaragua. A broad section of society and the Church intensely lived the years of the revolution, inspired by a great historic utopia that did not come to pass, which is why the dissatisfaction and frustration of this group is so great”, wrote Margot Bremer in *Alternatives* (# 14).

Many of the religious who participated in the meeting with the theologians belong to communities that arrived in the country in the 1980’s to accompany the people in the process of building a new society and were motivated by the expectations of the time. Today, they have lost their horizon and continue to be hit by the profound decomposition of the people and their leaders. They live the tension of people who have lost the reference point that fed their hope.

Another aspect is the ecclesial situation and the growth of new religious expressions and movements within and outside the religious community that have a very different reference point. On 2 February, the

Day of Consecrated Life, we celebrated the Eucharist with the papal nuncio in Managua cathedral. Managua has the most modern cathedral in the region. It was inaugurated in 1992. It was the first time we had gathered in the cathedral for this kind of meeting. From the altar the concelebrants could see a significant gathering of young religious women, mainly novices and professed, wearing colourful habits of many different styles.

The image was closer to the pre-Council time than the spirit of renewal inspired by Vatican II. This event forced me to highlight the plurality of experiences and styles in today's religious life and to be more objective in my observations without trying to make universal the particular experience I am addressing. Furthermore, the model of consecrated life that arose after the Council experience was neither homogenous nor universal, which can be seen in the plurality of forms and expressions in old and new congregations. Their external expression, piety and their way of living in the world demonstrates a way of seeing things that reinforces the traditional ecclesial model. What does all of this mean for us? First, it is an expression of the crisis in society and reverberates deep within the Church and in our way of interpreting the history of salvation. What is the meaning of the lineal vision of history that made us think from our first theology classes that everything moved toward one common good where little by little those who did not get on this train of history lost sight of the future? What is the meaning of this optimistic vision of the world that had so much influence in the Council and the proposals for the relationship between the Church and the world put forth in *Gaudium et Spes*? What should we think about the process of secularization in our modern society, especially in a country like Nicaragua that lived a profound change in all senses?

What triumphed based on this rationality was not a coherent Christian experience. Pentecostal movements and the so-called free churches are what have sprung up in the neighbourhoods and among the marginalized masses. The same thing is true in the peasant communities. They were protagonists in the literacy campaigns and agrarian reform programmes within our process and are now abandoned. The most fundamentalist religious experiences are growing and multiplying in these communities.

Christian base communities did not become references points for the faith of the poor. On the contrary, the fundamental evangelical movements and the traditionalist, pre-Vatican II Catholic religiosity have the largest numerical presence. Faced with modern rationality and the current crisis we find fundamentalism as the means for the re-conquest of the symbolic space. This situation of crisis responds to a loss of meaning in the world of the poor, particularly in relation to how power over this world is reconstructed in a religious and symbolic way.

This is different in the diverse social levels, but it is developed in each group always in absolute terms. For this to happen it is necessary to eliminate the categorical difference between the divine and the human, which is why fundamentalism plays the key role in the growth of Protestantism. Is this not the phenomenon being observed in the masses of people excluded in rural and urban areas?

In religious life, while we talk about the crisis in the model of modernity and question the paradigms of post-modernity, traditional manifestations continue to grow and offer security in a world that is insecure and torn apart. These manifestations are carried out in a generous spirit of giving and service to the poorest sectors. A traditional model of society generates a traditional model of religious life.

When we talk about the Nicaraguan Church in international meetings we are always asked about the Christians of the revolution and the works of Ernesto Cardenal are recalled. People remember a series of past events and experiences that created an image of a great movement of committed Christians. These historic references, however, are no longer significant. They do not correspond to the cultural and ideological conditions of the majority of Nicaraguans today.

We have not lived a homogenous process in religious life. There is a diversity of options. We never lacked those who from the beginning of the revolution, out of fear of a truly new adventure, turned to the most traditional forms of religious life. In the face of the crisis in the neo-liberal State, congregations that lived with renewing spirit have returned to a pastoral in education and health care and are working with the large institutions. There are also congregations that succumbed in the process, abandoning the ship in the difficult years or simply leaving the country because they felt pressured by external forces. There are other challenges today, but I am not that convinced that the current moment means that we are one step away from post-modernity. I have the impression that among us the post-revolution and everything it means does not necessarily lead to post-modernity. Instead, I believe that the post-modern paradigm comes from the predominant North-West cultural centralism that has been globalized and is brought to us through the media.

I am participating in a meeting with (former) Chiapas Bishop Samuel Ruiz. I am writing these reflections in my free time during the meeting. Bishop Samuel is very loquacious and he presented us with a frank picture of the reality of the Church in his Diocese and the pastoral experience. We watched videos of his 40th anniversary of service in the Diocese and the ordination of more than 150 married deacons. What stood out in these events was the massive participation of Indigenous peoples, who have gained an awareness of

themselves and have resisted the models of other cultural paradigms being imposed on them. Something similar may be happening among our *mestizo* population. Is the rise of popular religiosity a criticism of our model of evangelization that is inspired more by modern rationality than the life and culture of the people? Faced with the crisis of modernity we find ourselves without cultural and religious points of reference to respond to their vital needs. Traditional models are growing within the Church and we are being invaded by sects. At the same time, the Christian base communities and the congregations that offered a prophetic witness, heirs to a long and significant experience at a crucial time in history, are in a state of agony.

Analysts insist on talking about a rupture in time, with some affirming that there has been a radical change in the traditional paradigms of Western culture. In theological circles they talk about new emerging subjects and a new theological rationality. This is, undoubtedly, something that questions us.

Prophetic spirituality, paradigm of the consecrated life

When we talk about religious life we are referring to the most elaborated expression in its prophetic manifestation. Each moment in history has a referential religious expression and its own way of expressing hope. This is a characteristic of the revelation transmitted through Holy Scripture. The dark night of suffering is theologically expressed in the Book of Job. Popular wisdom surges in the absence of great prophets. The post-exile Books are a clear reference to the new way the people had of knowing the God of Life in other vital, historic spaces.

Following Jesus, the original paradigm of all Christian life and religious life in particular, is central to the search for stimulation in the field of spirituality. Concern for the brother and sister and mercy on the weak and sinners are unquestionable attitudes for Christian action.

Statements such as "Tomorrow's Christianity will be mystical or it will not be Christian" grab my attention. I ask myself: Are we living a crisis of spirituality today that is the fruit of our activism and our radical commitments?

In February, we Dominicans commemorated the 450th anniversary of Fray Antonio de Valdivieso. He was the first martyred Bishop on the continent because of his commitment to the defence of the original peoples of this land. On 24 March we celebrated the 20th anniversary of Archbishop Oscar Romero's martyrdom. The Conferences of Religious and the Major Superiors met in San Salvador during this time to reflect on the issues of prophetic spirituality and martyrdom. I do not think that spirituality was absent from these commitments. There

are many examples of brothers and sisters within the plurality of charisms and the ministries of the People of God who sealed their commitment with the blood of martyrdom. Is it possible to give one's life for others for a dignified and noble cause without a profound spirituality? It is hard for me to believe that spirituality is our first challenge today if we mean by this that we were committed and active in the past but lacked spirituality. I know that we are living in other times and that there are other challenges facing religious life, but this means that there are other angles to the same spirituality.

Is prophetic spirituality not characteristic of Christian tradition, of Jesus and his followers and the divine gift of consecrated life? We are certainly no longer in the 1970's. There are people who cringe when we relate our experiences or remember the past. It is true that this was not their experience and we cannot get stuck in our own nostalgia. We need to look toward the future and not lament what was or could have been. It is also legitimate, however, to affirm that history is a reference point. "History is the teacher of life", said the elders and if we turn to the Bible we will find that while the history of the People of God is not repeated it is not forgotten. The memory of the exodus is an inspiring line that crosses through the Old and New Testaments. The desert becomes a constant theological reference point. St Matthew tells us that Mary and Joseph relived the experience of Egypt with their newborn child. Before beginning his public life Jesus has the experience of the temptations in the desert. The Church itself will flee to the desert where it will live for 1,260 days, according to the Apocalypse (Rv 11).

Historical reference is important in Christian spirituality and in genuine Latin American spirituality, which has grown among us on the fertile ground watered by the blood of the martyrs. This spirituality has been characterized by following the historic Jesus. Today, believing like Jesus and following him means having a historic vision of reality. Jesus had a dynamic concept of time, which was not cyclical or enclosed but open and lineal, the *alpha* and the *omega*, and a concept of God as he who walks before us, opening the future and allowing us to build history.

The people who are troubled at the ease at which we have moved from social and economic analysis to cultural analysis as the starting point of our theological reflection have reason to be concerned. The prophetic vision of history is a determining factor. It is the vision of Jesus' historic praxis and is at the heart of the reality in all of his expressions. Today, the new People of God are walking in a history where the conditions for a prophetic attitude are not possible, which is why new paradigms are arising. Should religious life always aspire to be a prophetic sign for the People of God? Is giving oneself over to the ministry prophetic? If

the prophetic mission is the most important part of religious life shouldn't we always aspire to it? As such, is our crisis a product of a lack of prophetic weight? "The historical-eschatological characteristic of Jesus' message is clear (scientifically speaking and with Biblical texts in hand) today. It is a characteristic that cannot confuse following him (Christianity) with morality, a system of worship, a doctrine or simply belonging to a determined religion. Jesus' religion is an ethical-prophetic religion based on a historical-eschatological structure and not on the ontological-culturalist religiosity of the classical religious model (God above, human beings below). As such, it is responsibility with a final sense of history", wrote Jose Maria Vigil in *Alternativas* (# 14).

What we feel and experience is that the prophetic vision is passing through a critical time. History seems to be closed to changes and the horizon of hope is dark. Today, the poor are excluded, refuse of a system that is living a schizophrenia of meaning. They are no longer subjects who are aware and fighters committed to social transformation. They cannot achieve what modern society is proposing for them. The news media, nevertheless, stimulates dreams in them that they will never be able to enjoy. Street gangs and the sects are the forced ways out of this world of marginalization. This is the reality that is affecting the religious life inserted in poor communities and even more so in the generation that intensely lived the utopia of social changes and today finds that the people are poorer and that there is more human and social deterioration. How do we escape from this schizophrenia?

Crisis, Alternatives and Daily Spirituality

Spirituality is a cultural way of living the faith. Modern spirituality was based on the values and goals of global utopian objectives for social transformation and changes. Today we talk more about the person and of giving witness. Religion is seen more as a spatial understanding as experience and grace. From religions as visions of the world and bodies of beliefs, norms and theoretical values, we have moved to religion as an experience and a spirituality of the small, the daily, with less utopia and more reality, according to Amando Robles in *Alternativas* (# 14).

Solidarity of the concrete was born in Nicaragua as a result of Hurricane Mitch and it went beyond all expectations. No voices were raised, however, to protest against government problems and policies. The slogan was that we have to rebuild the nation. Is living this kind of experience of solidarity enough for us to express our prophetic vocation? Articulating small dimensions of life could be part of the divine gift but it does not fulfill the prophetic dimensions of religious life. It is normal that in the absence of prophetic voices the people called to live

the ecclesial life would experience ill feelings and crises.

Conclusion

There is a lot of talk today about creating networks of small experiences and projects. We do not need to create networks but form a social and ecclesial expression of who we are and what we want. The traditional peasants have their social expressions, references for their identity and meaning in popular celebrations. Today, displaced to the city and stripped of these references and sense of meaning, they find meaning in the sects that are offering social space and a body of references. In Nicaragua, the revolution created these spaces in the massive demonstrations, recreating a social imagery and an inspiring source of meaning. Sporting stadiums and music festivals for young people play the same role in secularized societies. A coherent social identity for our dreams are reaffirmed in these demonstrations. Spirituality of daily life is necessary, but it is not enough.

We need to recreate life on a small scale but we also need to be open to the utopian horizon, to a new heaven and a new Earth. In this sense, dreams are just as important as reality and public demonstrations are necessary to express these dreams. Raising personal awareness together with social expression is what we discover in the massive demonstrations held by Indigenous peoples. The demonstrations allowed them to express their vision of the cosmos while at the same time demanding political and social spaces that had long been denied them.

Together with the daily struggle it is necessary to dream together that there can be a new heaven and a new earth for all and that this dream can be brought into line with our concrete reality.

To achieve this we need to recreate a utopia with new symbolic references and historical flavour, recreate historic memory with new saints that embody and create social images that inspire and convoke us. We do not doubt the value of committed and detailed work being done by religious men and women in poor *barrios*. They are convinced of what they are doing, taking one small step at a time. This is not the problem. The lack of recognition and acceptance of these experiences is what is causing personal and group crises. The most important thing about the presence of CLAR among us was that it allowed us to express ourselves as Church and leave behind the marginalization and anonymity. It allowed us to feel part of this Body that we all form and live in greater communion, which transcends the experience of the small group and opens us to a broader sense of ecclesial community. This is what we needed.

Thank you.

From: *Revista CLAR* (Colombia), Year XXXVIII, n. 2, 2000, in *LADOC*, Vol. XXXI, Sept/Oct 2000.

Fr Walter von Holzen, SVD - Executive Director SEDOS

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SEDOS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2000

I. INTRODUCTION

Once again I take this opportunity of the Annual Report to greet you all, wherever you may read it. It is a link between the *SEDOS Secretariat* and our Generalates here in Rome, but it is also a greeting to *all the missionaries in the field* who usually read these lines in the SEDOS Bulletin. It presents an opportunity for us to thank you for the contacts we have had during the year and for the many words of encouragement we received. It should give you an idea of the main activities SEDOS has organized in Rome, the publications and services of our Secretariat and of the projects we have for the future.

II. STRUCTURE

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The members of the Executive Committee for the year 1999 were:

President:	Bernardine Mullaveetil , RNDM, Superior General of the Religious of Our Lady of the Missions. – Elected to the Executive in 1997.
Vice-President	Piero Trabucco , IMC, Superior General of the Consolata Missionaries. Elected to the Executive in 1997.
Treasurer	Anne Quinn , SMSM, General Bursar of the Marist Missionary Sisters
	Filo Hirota , MMB, Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz since 1997
	Miceál O'Neill , O-CARM, Order of Carmelites since 1998
	Eileen Cummins , OLA, Our Lady of Africa since 1999
	Carlos Pape , SVD, Society of the Divine Word since 1999
Executive Director	Walter von Holzen , SVD since 1992

2. CHANGES IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

During the year two members of the Executive finished the work at their Generalates and left Rome. **Sr Anne Quinn**, SMSM, who served SEDOS during five years as bursar, has given a lot of her time and energy to the financial well-being of the organisation. **Sr Ursula Bugembe**, RSCJ, our representative for Africa, was an appreciated, collaborative member of the Executive. **Fr Carlos Pape**, SVD, who has accompanied SEDOS for many years as a faithful collaborator, will leave Rome at Easter. We shall therefore take the opportunity to elect a new member from Latin America. —

In the name of all the member congregations I take this opportunity to thank the members leaving the Executive Committee for their generous service in the different functions of the Executive. Wherever they may be, the SEDOS Bulletin will remind them of their time at SEDOS in Rome. At this meeting new members have to be elected to the Executive Committee to replace the outgoing members.

3. SEDOS SECRETARIAT STAFF

Many of you have had an opportunity to get to know our secretaries, be it at the activities or in the secretariat. Because of her long absence due to a very delicate pregnancy, **Mrs Margherita Lofthouse** had to be substituted during the whole year by two part-time assistants. **Ms Clelia Parisi** (morning) and **Mrs Cinzia Marzano** (afternoon) were an invaluable help during this period. Ms **Emanuela Gismondi** who worked on the SEDOS Bulletin for the last three

years, left us to start her own enterprise and was replaced by **Ms Ilaria Iadeluca** who started work in June. **Ms Philippa Wooldridge** continues to do the English proof-reading and **Mr Stefano Cacace**, a young computer expert, continued in a part-time capacity to keep our homepage up-dated.

III. ACTIVITIES OF SEDOS

A. SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

1. SEDOS MISSIONARY CONGRESS FOR THE JUBILEE 2000 (3-8 April)

a) Intention and model

SEDOS' contribution to the missionary dimension of the Jubilee was a **Missionary Congress**, where some central aspects of the missionary tasks of the Church going into the new century were considered. It was our intention to offer to our Generalates here in Rome and also to a wider audience the insights of some well-known theologians of the missionary Church on the different continents. — In order not to interfere with the normal routine of our communities here in Rome, the model of afternoon sessions was chosen. The work was spread over six days to allow a certain concentration of the reflection process in one week. The *model chosen* received a very positive reception. Each afternoon was dedicated to a geographic area with a *key conference*. After a break, a prepared response by one of the six invited guest speakers completed with a second input the *presentation part*. This meant the exchange of all the texts among the speakers one month before, with good results. In a third step, the participants of each session were organized quickly into ever new language groups which had their *prepared moderators and secretaries* for each day and continent. In a fourth part, a free exchange on the topic in the assembly was organized, to allow a spontaneous report from the group process and personal insights and questions. In a fifth final step, Fr Robert Schreiter, head professor of missiology at CTU in Chicago, presented a résumé of the day, relating the daily reflection to the ongoing process. — On the last day, the group process was substituted by an interesting panel with the speakers. This positive change in the programme was possible because all the six speakers remained with the SEDOS community the whole week.

b) Speakers and their key conferences

Monday – East Asia:	Sr Kim Sung-Hae, SC, Korea <i>East-Asian understanding of Mission and Future of Christian Presence</i> Response: Michael Amaladoss, SJ
Tuesday – South Asia:	Fr Michael Amaladoss, SJ, India <i>Identity and Harmony – Challenges to Mission in South Asia</i> Response: Mercy Amba Odoyoye
Wednesday – Africa	Ms Mercy Amba Odoyoye, Ghana <i>Three Cardinal Issues of Mission in Africa</i> Response: Sr Kim Sung-Hae, SC
Thursday – Europe	Fr Peter Huenermann, Germany <i>Evangelisation in Europe</i> Response: Sr Maria de Freitas, FI
Friday – Latin America	Sr Maria de Freitas, FI, Brazil <i>Misión de Religiosos(as) en América Latina hoy: Misión liberadora en un mundo neoliberal</i> Response: Fr Robert Schreiter, CPPS
Saturday – United States	Fr Robert Schreiter, CPPS, USA <i>Mission – Globalization – Reconciliation</i> <i>Is a New Catholicity Possible in Mission?</i> Response: Fr Peter Huenermann

c) Publication of the Conferences

Over the last six years, SEDOS Secretariat was able to publish in four different books the results of the *four symposia* (total 60 conferences) we have organized parallel to the *Synods for Africa, Asia, America and Europe*. How could the publication of this congress be organized? Father Robert Schreiter, one of the missionary experts of the U.S. Church, felt that the material of the 2000 congress could be offered to ORBIS BOOKS, because if published by this renowned publishing house, it would reach a much wider audience than the limited promotion of our Rome Secretariat. ORBIS has agreed to publish all the congress papers. Fr Schreiter will complete the papers with an additional chapter formulating the conclusions of the congress and take a look at the future of mission, based on what we heard about the local missionary Churches.

d) Evaluation and Thanks

Many participants expressed satisfaction with the *model* chosen for the meeting. Some even thought, this might be a valid alternative (at least *every few years*) to our regular residential meetings in Ariccia, which stand out, of course, as an important opportunity for missionary sharing at Generalate level. – A very special thanks should be expressed to the six speakers, for their excellent contributions and for the time they spent with us during the week. They all proved to be great friends of SEDOS. – Another special thanks goes to the about 50 volunteers who contributed with their competence as coordinators of the daily language groups. – Our formal thanks should once again be expressed to the community and Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools who made the whole congress possible. The collaboration of Br Emanuel Sciberras, FSC, the guest-master of the house and the partner of SEDOS at all activities, is praiseworthy.

2. ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONFERENCES (5 December 2000)

The Annual General Assembly morning talks were dedicated to a study of “*A SPIRITUALITY FOR OUR MISSION IN A NEW WORLD*”. Two first-rate speakers were invited to reflect on this essential dimension of our missionary spirituality in a new century.

Sr Joan Chittister, OSB, from the USA, spoke on “*A Feminist Spirituality for Men and Women*”.

Fr Timothy Radcliffe, OP, Superior General, reflected on “*A Missionary Spirituality for a New World*”.

B. SEDOS WORKING GROUPS

1. CHINA

The CHINA working group is going strong and is about to enter its fifth year. The numerous and lively participation at the meetings makes evident that the challenge of mission in the Church of Continental China is of great interest to many of our Generalates. – **Fr James Perluzzi**, OFM, continued throughout the year as its dedicated coordinator and he succeeded time and again to invite people (either in Rome or passing through it) to give inputs on the actual situation and new developments in China. Once again, **Fr Lazzarotto**, PIME, an expert on China, was invited for an input. The group dedicated special attention to the new religious movements in China and the resulting persecution, as well as the significance (political and religious) of the *canonization of the Chinese Martyrs*.

2. WORLD DEBT

The working group, now going into its sixth year of patient work and meetings, has given many inputs and reflections at the level of our member congregations. The group was an active instrument in building up the *Jubilee campaign for debt release*. But the reflections of the group always went further than debt release, studying the fundamental task of raising awareness for the basic reality of *neo-liberal models at the structural roots of unjust, dependent situations*. **Fr Mike Seigel**, SVD, finishes his term as coordinator at the end of the year. He has given his soul and expertise to the group. With invitations to speak on the debt issue at several international meetings, e.g. at Dayton University in the U.S. and for *Caritas Internationalis*, the whole working group felt honoured. **Sr Cathy Arata**, SNDS, who joined the group during the year, will take over the coordination. To give its work an interreligious dimension, the group plans to contact similarly engaged groups of other main religions.

C. SEDOS PUBLICATIONS

1. SEDOS BULLETIN

Also this year the preparation and publication of our SEDOS Bulletin with articles in two languages was one of our main occupations. I think it can be said that the Bulletin receives very positive reactions. On the *one hand*, we publish our own conferences held in Rome and on the *other*, we try to select the best material on *mission and related topics* available. We are printing 1,100 copies at the moment, of which about 250 go to the Generalates and the rest to the subscribers directly. The fact that many important theological and missiological reviews agree to an exchange with our Bulletin enables us to receive a good number of theological reviews which we would not be able to pay for otherwise. A project to publish all SEDOS articles in the Bulletins from 1996 to 2000 on a Compact Disc is in preparation (260 articles).

2. SEDOS INTERNET HOMEPAGE —

SEDOS has understood from the beginning the manifold possibilities of the Internet. In 1995 we were among the pioneers to open a missionary homepage (<http://www.sedos.org>). At the moment we can say that our homepage has become a *missionary meeting point* for people in the whole world looking for good contributions on different fields of mission. The homepage offers a *members' address list* which we try to update every month. The three language menus *now offer 300 articles* in English, French, Spanish/Portuguese. We are trying to put out 5-10 new articles every month. The feed-back we get encourages us to continue this new form of missionary publication and service. This global instrument helps us to realize one of the founding ideas of SEDOS: to be a cooperative missionary instrument at the service of mission on all the continents.

IV. LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

SEDOS SEMINAR 2001 — ARICCIA

After one year's break, we shall again hold our *Ariccia Seminar* in the third week of May. The meeting will begin on Tuesday, 15 May and finish on Saturday, 19 May. The topic chosen is: *WHAT IS OUR VISION OF A MISSIONARY CHURCH FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY*". We shall try to respond to this question, which touches the very identity of our vocation, in a totally participative process. For that reason we have invited Mrs *Margaret Denis*, a specialist in group processes and an expert in general chapters. As a theological adviser for the process we have requested the collaboration of the well-known theologian and missionary, *Fr Michel De Verteuil*, CSSp, from Trinidad and Tobago.

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR : FR BERNARD EAST, OP

In a few days, *Fr Bernard East*, our new Executive Director, appointed last year by this General Assembly, will take over the SEDOS Secretariat. At this moment in the 35 year-history of SEDOS, I too would like to give him a very cordial welcome. We are glad that *Fr Timothy Radcliffe*, OP, and his council freed him for this missionary service to our international organisation. In his life as religious, religious superior, General Councillor of the previous administration where he was responsible for the missionary territories, he has shown his capacity and dedication. We thank him personally for accepting to come to SEDOS to assume a new mission.

— I personally want to end this Report with a note of thanks. Looking back at eight years as Executive Director of SEDOS, I am filled with strong sentiments of joy and gratitude. *Thanks* then, *to all of you*, missionary women and men, different *presidents and executive members* working together during eight years; thanks to *all participants* in so many meetings and interesting moments. The very special *kairos* the missionary Church lived through during the *five special Synods*, also defined my mission here for you. The *openness of your horizons* as missionaries, the *challenges of your experience and projects* made it possible for SEDOS to offer you and your congregation a definite space of freedom and creativity in a time of renewed centralism and control. I humbly pray for SEDOS, and for the new people who will come and continue our work. May our characteristic openness to the creative, divine Spirit continue to mark our organisation.

Fr Walter von Holzen, SVD, Executive Director

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Happy Christmas and
Many Blessings
in the New Year**

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