SEDOS

BULLETIN

79/No. 5 March 15, 1979

Monsignor Tchao of Vatican Radio and Fr. Paul Pang, ofm have kindly agreed to be speakers at our China meeting to be held on Thursday, 29th March. Monsignor Tchao will give highlights of his recent visit to China while Fr. Pang will report on the ecumenical meeting of Chinese Theologians held recently in Hong Kong. He will also describe the work of the recently established Centre of Chinese Pastoral Studies.

Many of us have enjoyed the gracious hospitality of the Medical Missionary Sisters at the Sedos Health Meetings. However, it was felt that a more central located venue would be more desirable. The April 5th meeting will be at the Salvatorian Fathers Generalate, Via della Conciliazione, 51.

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Coming Events

-Tuesday, 20th March - 4 p.m. at the Sisters of Charity of Tilburg - Via Monte Cucco 25. — Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society

To get to the Generalate of the Sisters of Charity, take bus 96 with a red board on the side saying "Monte Cucco" from Piazza Venezia or Viale Trastevere. Stay on the bus until the end of the line. By car - Via Portuense to Via del Trullo to Via Monte Cucco.

-Tuesday, 27th March - 4 p.m. at the Generalate of the Christian Brothers — EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

-Thursday, 29th March - 4 p.m. at the Generalate of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Via Giusti 12, — China Meeting

-Thursday, 5th April - 4 p.m. at the Generalate of the Salvatorian Fathers, Via della Conciliazione 51. — Sedos Health Group Meeting on Primary Health Care with relationship to the Year of the Child and Basic Christian Communities

SEDOS SEMINAR AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Tuesday, 22nd May - 8.30 - 6.00 p.m.
at the Generalate of Christian Brothers

VIA DEI VERBITI, 1. 00154 ROMA C.P. 50.80. TEL. 571350

SEDOS - SERVIZIO DI DOCUMENTAZIONE E STUDI

Topic: LAY MINISTRIES

LAY MINISTERS FOR TOMORROW'S CHURCH

By
Donald F. Brophy

"Ministry" is rapidly becoming one of the hackneyed words in this year's ecclesiastical jargon. Everyone is talking about"ministry". In fact, it is considered especially chic to talk about "lay ministry", since it is taken for granted that priests and religious are ministers ex officio.

The thing that makes conversation about lay ministry so intriguing is its enormous potential for coming true: Hundreds of thousands of lay people who are transformed by a new vision of their Christian vocation could have a powerful impact on the church and on society.

I write as a lay person without claiming to be an expert. Lay ministry is such a new phenomenon that it has not produced any experts yet. In addition, ministry is not a theoretical science; it is not going to be shaped in the sterile milieu of a classroom or at a national conference or even in a chancery office. Ministry takes shape only in practice.

The Catholic Church around the world is presently undergoing a revolution in ministries. A number of circumstances is making this so. There are signs of the revolution here in the United States, but it is most clearly seen overseas - in Latin America, Asia, Africa and even in Europe. In many parts of the world today lay people are carrying out functions in the Christian community and apostolate that 15 years ago were reserved exclusively to the clergy. Lay people are preaching, caring for the sick, administering some of the sacraments, serving as chaplains, instructing converts, leading prayer services, giving retreats and providing counseling and spiritual direction. In Brazil, the Philippines and the Dominican Republic, lay people are serving as pastors of parishes. They are not usually called "pastors"; they have titles like "president of the assembly," but, for all real purposes, they are pastors, Most of these leaders have been elected by their peers to preside over communities that have no priests. Cardinal George Hume in London has proposed a somewhat similar plan for the English church.

I offer the following examples as signs of the times:
Item: The two most effective spiritual renewal movements in the United States in the last decade have been carried out largely by lay people. These are the charismatic movement and the Marriage Encounter movement. Both of these operations rely almost entirely upon peer ministry. It makes little difference to charismatics or Marriage Encounter people whether their leaders are priests or lay people. Ministry, for them, is an exercise of personal gifts rather than ordination.

Item: According to the Catholic Campus Ministry Association, the percentage of laity involved in full-time college ministry has risen in the last couple of years from about 4 percent to 10 percent, and their number is increasing rapidly. Another 20 percent of the campus ministers are

sisters. A few years hence, it won't be unusual to find a situation like that at St. Xavier's College in suburban Chicago where a layman, Steve Murphy, runs the campus ministry office by himself. There are no priests assigned to the office.

Item: The Diocese of Dallas has just given a $7,500 grant to a laywoman, Cecilia Bennett, so that she can get her degree in church administration from the Catholic University of America. Once she has her degree she will work with the diocese. We can expect that in the future a growing number of lay people will call upon their parishes and dioceses to underwrite their education, just as the diocese does for its priests, in return for service once the education is complete.

Item: An ecumenical ministry called The Pittsburgh Experiment has been working successfully in the business community for some years now. This is a loose association of business executives, both Catholic and Protestant, who come together in meetings or at lunch to talk about the pressures of their jobs, to pray and to support each other.

Item: Three years ago Catholic missionaries returned to five mission stations in the Diocese of Porto Amelia in Mozambique that had been vacated by the clergy for a period of 10 years during the civil war there. The missionaries half expected to find the mission stations in ruins, but this was not the case. In their absence, native Catholics who belonged to the Legion of Mary had taken charge. During the 10-year period they had opened 77 new catechetical centers with full-time staffs, they had witnessed 510 marriages and had baptized 66,000 people.

There are several reasons that this revolution in ministries is occurring at this particular moment. First, the Catholic Church is facing a worldwide shortage of priests and religious. Although the shortage is most acute in mission lands, it is already a serious problem in the United States and will become even more serious. Speaking at a meeting of the American bishops last November, Archbishop Jean Jadot predicted that "at most within 10 years" the problem would reach serious proportions in this country. The delegate did not hold out any hope that a sudden surge in vocations to the priesthood would alleviate the problem. Instead he suggested giving "greater responsibilities to the laity, both men and women," and making "more effective use of permanent deacons and extraordinary ministers."

Occurring at the same time as this shortage of clergy is a groundswell of popular desire among ordinary people to involve themselves in activities that have a caring and serving dimension. The human-potential movement in this country illustrates this need. More and more people feel themselves caught up in a high-pressure world, tied to their desks or trapped in assembly lines. They want to touch each other again. They want to explore their human talents and gifts that are not being used. Their altruism is untapped: the former Peace Corps volunteer who now sits in some office, the computer programmer who once marched against the Vietnam war, the former priest or religious - all of them feel a need today to serve people again. For all these, ministry can be

a path to liberation and human fulfillment. We have today a generation of Catholics who have the talent, the leisure and the desire to serve as ministers to the church and to the world. All they ask is the opportunity. These young volunteers are from that generation of Catholics who survived the decade of church renewal with all the hostilities and unreal expectations it engendered. Many of them still disagree with "Humanae Vitae," but that is not enough to alienate them from the church. These are people who believe in the Gospel and who can live with an imperfect church as long as it offers them a place to discover their own human potential through service.

Finally, this rise of interest in lay ministry has been heightened by a new appreciation for the role of the laity in the church today. The 20th century may well be remembered in future church histories as the century of the lay person. Pius XI started it off with the movement known as Catholic Action, which he defined as "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the church's hierarchy." In practice, Catholic Action portrayed the laity as a kind of tool or weapon to be used by the bishops and pastors in those spheres of society that they could not enter themselves - areas such as politics or economics. But already by the time of Pius XII people were beginning to see the weakness of that definition. After all, it was pointed out that not just the hierarchy is called to service; the laity has a calling proper to itself. And so, during the 1950's and 1960's, the term "lay apostolate" became popular as a definition of lay activity that reached its fullest expression in Vatican II.

According to the lay-apostolate model, lay persons were acknowledged to have a natural calling to Christianize the world by their witness and their good works. The laity were not just the instruments of the church, they were themselves the church, the People of God. Like beams of light they radiated out from the church to carry Christ to the world and to give witness to Christ wherever He was discovered in the world.

This description offered by Vatican II was certainly far better than the Catholic Action model. But even this one, we are beginning to see, has its very fundamental flaw. The problem stems from the fact that lay activity is still defined in terms of the world and clerical activity in terms of the church. This dichotomy tends to separate the church from the world, and it reinforces the notion that the church is a clerical institution. Since lay people are defined as being secular, they are frustrated in their dealings with the church, which is identified with the clergy. The priests, on the other hand, believing that they are defined by their ordination, no longer see themselves in that fundamental relationship with other Christians which is implied by their baptism. In this situation, both sides lose.

And so the question presents itself: How is it possible to talk about the apostolate of the laity? The answer seems to be that we cannot talk about the apostolate of the laity, at least not as something over against the apostolate of the bishops and priests. All we can talk about is the apostolate of the church.

This view of the Christian apostolate, if it becomes generally accepted, will have a significant impact on any future discussion of ministry, especially for the ministry of the laity. First, it will become more and more difficult to distinguish lay ministries from clerical ministries. There will be more laity doing "churchy" things, along the lines of the examples given above, and there will be more clergy involved in "secular" pursuits. Instead of rigidly defined roles within the group, there will be more emphasis on the overall ministry and mission of the church. And, by "church," I am here talking about the local Christian community, the parish or prayer group.

Eventually, with the breakdown of the clergy/lay dichotomy, it will be possible to get rid of the notion that the church allows for only two kinds of vocations. Thus the door will be opened to a flowering of ministries.

In order to unleash the full power of lay ministry in the church, it is clear that we must face a sizable job of consciousness-raising. Lay people must begin to see that they, too, have an explicit vocation to Christianize the world, to nourish it, to promote justice and practice charity. They do not have lesser vocations than priests and religious. They have the same vocations, the same responsibilities. As full members of the church, they are called to precisely the same apostolate.

For their part, priests must surrender any pretentions about having a higher or more perfect call within the church. The community itself is called, not just a few selected individuals. They may have more expertise or training. They may even have different roles to play in the Christian assembly, but their vocation is essentially the same as anyone else's.

Priests and religious must eliminate all traces of paternalism. Pastors, for example, must not merely delegate work to various parishioners, since, for one thing, genuine ministries are not like jobs that can be assigned to people. To designate duties as the "boss" of the parish reveals the traditional, but no longer sufficient, view of the lay person as the tool of the church.

Ministries, if they are going to be genuine, have to emerge naturally from a Christian community that lives a rich spiritual life and that attempts to place itself in a stance of justice toward its neighbourhood and the rest of the world. That phrase, "flowering of ministries," is a useful one, because ministries have to be rooted in the nourishing soil of the community, and they have to be allowed to grow in their own time with their own innate, genetic characteristics. It is the church, not just a small cadre of individuals, that is called to the apostolate. It is the church, the local Christian community, that perceives what needs to be done, that formulates its own agenda, that gives birth to ministries and that supports them in moments of trial. In the long run, no flowering of ministries will take place until we allow the development of communities where they can take root.

This is the point at which pastors and professional church-staff people can play a large role in the development of lay ministries. The kind of help they can give is, perhaps, best typified in the work carried out by foreign missionaries in this postcolonial era. Let us use them as a model.

In the decades since World War II, missionaries going out from the United States, France and Germany discovered that they could not assume positions of local leadership the way they did in the old days. The missionaries discovered, among other things, that they were unqualified to be interpreters of a culture so different from their own, a culture they could easily escape from whenever they had vacations or were reassigned. Missionaries have come to see themselves less and less as community leaders but rather as community "formers." They could prepare the soil, sow the seeds, even offer nourishment to the plants, but ultimately they knew they must allow the community to grow according to its own design and to respond to the world in its own way.

I think we are going through a phase when the institutional church in this country is viewed by a growing number of laity as a colonial power. This is not an attitude of hostility on the part of the lay people but one of perceived cultural difference. The institution has its own agenda, an agenda that is not always the same as the people's agenda. As a result of these differences, in the coming years, the roles of ordained clergy and other institutional figures will probably not be the roles of community leaders, but community formers. Presumably that was also the conclusion of the Second General Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome in 1971. The bishops declared:

"Let priests...strive with great prudence and pastoral charity to form communities which are imbued with apostolic zeal and which will make the Church's missionary spirit present everywhere. Small communities, which are not opposed to parish or diocesan structures, ought to be inserted into the parochial or diocesan community in such a way that they may serve it as a leaven of missionary spirit. The need to find apt forms of effectively bringing the Gospel message to all men, who live in differing circumstances, furnishes a place for the multiple exercise of ministries."

All of this is not to advocate the laity's simple taking over the functions of the clergy. Instead, we must bring to life a church where ministry is nothing less and nothing more than the common coin of the community. We have to bring to life a church in which all members are expected to be ministers as a price of their membership, where sharing is a lived experience, not just a sacramental one. We must form communities that constantly summon people to serve, identify areas of need, discern the talents of their members and put the explicit stamp of Christian ministry on people's attempts to help each other and their neighborhoods. In the long run we have to develop a spirituality that leads people to realize that all helping activity is ministerial and priestly. One way of doing this is to create a process for the community to ratify publicly the accomplishments of its members.

In addition, communities should have some kind of inventory of the talents individual members bring to it, discovered easily enough by asking pertinent questions on the standard parish census cards. The community leadership should have some idea of the human resources that might be utilized.

When it comes to encouraging specific activities, the ones that are most important, in the sense that they must come first, are those that serve the community itself. One cannot have a ministering community until one first has a community. And so the activities like welcoming, visiting homes, praying, celebrating, studying together and serving the immediate needs of the membership are community-building ministries.

We do know that lay ministry in some shape or form is going to be increasingly prevalent in the future. Our job now is to raise the consciousness of all the church so that lay persons will at last accept the vocation they took on at baptism. This is the dream held out to us by the Fathers of Vatican II when they declared:

"By its very nature the Christian vocation is also a vocation of the apostolate. No part of the structure of the living body is merely passive, but each has its share in the functions as well as the life of the body...

In the Church there is a diversity of service but a unity of purpose...The laity, too, share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own role to play in the mission of the whole People of God in the Church and in the world" ("Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity," n.2).

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(Donald F. Brophy, an associate editor of Paulist Press in New York, developed this article from an address to the National Conference of Catholic Charities in New York last autumn.)

Reference: AMERICA/February 4, 1978.

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Recent material on Lay Ministries:

5.K (31/78)	"Diversité et unité des ministères" par Claude Champagne, omi, KERYGMA, No. 31. 1978.
4/3366	"Volontaires de l'enseignement."
4/3321	"New Forms of Ministry: Laity, the untapped missionary potential."

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The Statement of the Asian Theological Conference held in Sri Lanka which was published in the Sedos Bulletin of 1st March, 1979 is available in French in Foi et Développement No. 64, February 1979.

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LIVING AMONG MUSLIMS

Tenenkou, on the inland delta of the Niger, in Mali, is the home-village of the traditional leader of the Fulani of Macina. The Fulani are a semi-nomadic pastoral people. They share the country with their "captives", farmers whom they found already living on the land when they conquered it in the XVth Century. During the XVIIIth Cent. a truly theocratic islamic empire, the "Dina" of Macina, was founded under the rule of the conqueror Sekou Amadou. As a result one finds there today a special type of Islam, very homogeneous and fervent. Fulani and "captives" speak the same language, follow the same customs as regards clothes, housing, etc..are mutually interdependent economically, but remain apart socially in a rather marked way. Also to be found are the Bozos who make their living by fishing on the river. They too are nomads, since they must follow the high and low waters of the Niger river. During the dry season, Tenenkou receives the visit of the Twaregs and their captives the Bellos as they come from the Sahel. But here the Fulanis are masters in their own land.

This Fulani people receives us. We are their guests. The "fraternity" began four years ago (in 1971) on the initiative of the bishop of Segu who sent us there. The characteristic mark of this "fraternity" is that it has been sent to a 100% Muslim milieu. In Tenenkou there is no Christian community. How does this fraternity define itself today? What is for us the essence of our witness? If we had to summarize our mission in one single sentence, we would rather say that we want to be a <u>community that bears witness of its faith in Christ, living today, among the Muslim Fulani of Macina</u>.

In the beginning, when we were asked who we were, we used to say that we were "marabus", (<u>murābitūn</u>), men of God. Those who knew us better used to tell each other that we were"praying people", "people reading the Book". Rather soon, we realised that the word "marabu" was ambiguous. Many people thought of us in the same way as they thought of their "marabus", and asked us to "work", that is to begin giving them amulets, or the "name" of God that procures wealth, protects cattle, keeps people healthy; or even ensures success among women and victory in rowing-races. To-day we prefer to introduce ourselves as "messengers of Jesus", and we understand our own selves more and more as a community of people "seeking for God".

"Seeking for God"...because we are not in possession of a truth acquired once and for all, and because we know that we carry our faith in vessels of clay. This means first of all that we try to lay the emphasis on prayer throughout our days, both from the point of view of the time dedicated to it and of the quality of this prayer, listening to the Spirit (who is our "patron") and to the Word. It means as well an emphasis on our life together as brothers as people committed to each other, spending time for each other, and doing it well, becoming servants of each other in very concrete, practical ways, often in "trifles". We take time to "live together" and even, why not, to "live happily together". We could not "stand it" very

long here if we were alone, but, above all, we want to express clearly the ecclesial aspect, the community dimensions, of our faith. "Seeking for God" finally means for us the attitude of openness, seeking to discover God in the innermost reality of human existence as it is lived around us.

Trying to live as a community "seeking for God", and more precisely, for God made man in Christ Jesus, we do it in relation with the "Umma", the Muslims' Faith-Community, a Community which is well-structured, has no need of us, thinks of itself as superior to us, and practically judges us to be in error. This is why we think that our witness can only be received as a common witness. We are careful never to make individual choices. Since we are very near to this Muslim Community, it is essential for us to know, esteem, and adopt its real faith-values, such as Prayer, Adoration, Total-Submission to God's will. And yet, even though we let ourselves be touched by the values that inspire the Muslims living around us, we know as well that we have a message to reveal to them; the "Joyful News" of God-made-man-in-Jesus-Christ. We are called to extend to Macina this incarnation which expresses God's Love for men. We are called to make it present and perceptible here. As an ecclesial community, we are called upon to bear witness to that Love which flows from the innermost being of God - their God - whom they do not yet know as Community of Love.

We want to insist here on the word "Trying"...This conception of our mission here has nothing original about it: it follows the basic intuitions of people like Francis of Assisi, Lavigerie, Charles de Foucauld...But we have been led to discover anew, as we live here, in this particular setting, the requirements of Incarnation as it has been lived by Jesus, and preached by Paul: "I became all things to all men in order to save them"...

Our neighbours understood it perfectly saying: "They have adopted all our ways in order to get us"...This is commonly said about us in our neighbourhood. Of course this opinion is ambiguous, to say the least, but it shows that our effort at adaptation to the milieu, our attempt to share in their way of life can be realized in practice and be perceived as such by the people. This means, of course, that we know their language and customs, but it means as well that we dress like them, thus becoming less noticeable, eat the same type of food which allows us to welcome any guest who happens to drop in, live in the same kind of hut, so that each one feels at home when visiting us, and we have to bear with the same discomforts that our neighbours put up with. A sister who arrived at Tenenkou after night-fall, began to sleep in the open, a few steps away from our compound because she has not been able to single out "the mission"! Naturally, and unfortunately, we have to take into account our physical limitations, reached so quickly in this effort. For instance, we have not been able to immerse ourselves in the world of workers.

We pray in a large straw hut, in every way resembling those of our neighbours and built by them. This would seem to "signify" something for us, but also for them, just as do the postures we adopt in prayer. Inspiration for these has been

drawn to a great extent from the postures of Islamic prayer. We have adopted them, not out of mimicry, but so that our prayer may really be perceived for what it is. We are never disturbed when we pray with bare feet, our faces turned towards the rising sun which Christ is for us, and prostrating, our heads touching the ground, during the doxologies. Quite recently, when we were on safari and had made a halt near a family of nomads, their confidence was gained only after they has seen us praying the dawn office in this manner. From then on, we were perceived as being near them, brother-believers. Much remains to be done, experienced, invented in this field, especially in order to render our prayer less "celebral". We are more and more conscious of the fact that this incarnation will be lived to the full only when our fraternity includes African members. For a while, there was a Christian man, a nurse, who had entered fully into our life, and we still feel his transfer to another town as a mutilation of our fraternity. There is with us as well Almani, a Muslim Bambara, and his family. He lives his Muslim faith with fervour and insight, and often provokes our admiration. Only African brothers will be able to understand from within this people, their life, the values that are their own, in order to adopt them and give them the "sweet odour of Christ". That is perhaps what the words "to desire to get them" mean for us.

To be incarnate as Christ was, means more than just making oneself all things to all men, Fulani with the Fulanis.. If it is true that Christ "though his state was divine... emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are", it is true as well that he did not pass unnoticed. He kept proclaiming his relationship to the Father without inhibition. Our point of reference must remain, explicitly, this very same Christ, living and risen. This reference to Christ must find expression in our speech, even at the risk of being misunderstood, as Jesus was in the Gospel, and of shocking people. And so, without indulging in proselytism, we are trying, but not yet sufficiently, to preach the Good News explicitly, using especially as starting point the parables which can be so meaningful in a land like ours.

Finally if we want to bear witness to Love, it is not enough that we try to live that love among ourselves, nor is it enough to talk about it, we must be filled with it, filled to overflowing, till that love becomes perceptible to everyone around us. This is the purpose behind our modest attempts to take part in "developing" the people who welcomed us. The part we play is not very important (gardening, introduction to tools, cooking lessons for women). It is not that we have no means to do more, nor is it that we are not qualified. The reason is that we are not looking for productivity or efficiency: experience shows that the poorest are usually left out and suffer from it. What we want is to offer our help as the concrete expression of God's love attempting to liberate this or that man, trying to make him understand that he is loved and accepted for himself. That is why we believe strongly in human relationships built up patiently over a period of time. Of course, all this is not easy, and we are very much aware that we are most often falling far short of our ideal. What gives us new courage, day after day, is the communion of our friends

all over the world, and the thought that other communities "Keep trying" in their poverty just as we do.

Maybe our effort to be a presence here could be summed up in this sentence of Serge de Beaurecueil:

> "Before offering the Living water to the Samaritan woman, one must first be exhausted from having walked and wandered on the highways of all, one must be burnt out from the sun and the dust,...and become like a beggar who comes to another faith, another race and keeps asking for a long time that he be given something to drink..."

At a time when the Church meditates on her evangelization mission, we would be inclined to make our own the answer given by St. Francis to Brother Tancrede in "Sagesse d'un Pauvre"

> "Evangelizing, preaching the Gospel to someone, means telling him: you too, you are loved by God in the Lord Jesus...It means behaving towards this man in such a way that he may feel and discover in himself something that is saved, something greater, more noble than he thought, till he comes to a new way of thinking about himself. You cannot do it any other way than by giving him your friendship, a friendship which will make him sense that he is loved by God in Jesus-Christ".
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> (Mali, Georges Janssens and the team of Tenenkou).

Reference: ENCOUNTER, No. 48, October 1978.

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AUSTRALIA: MEETING ISLAM IN AUSTRALIA

(79/25) There are about 200,000 Muslims in Australia, comprising both temporary residents (mainly students) and permanent immigrant settlers (mainly from the Middle East, Indonesia and Pakistan).

A part of the initiative in dialogue with Islam, with which a number of Dominicans throughout the world are now associated, will be a conference on Islam and Christianity to be held in Australia at Mannix College, Monash University (Melbourne) on 28-31 August. It will be the first seminar of its kind in Australia, and one of the two guests speakers will be Fr. G. Anawati, O.P., from IDEO, Cairo. It is planned that a Muslim scholar from Ryadh University will also be present.

Muslims in Australia are enthusiastic and involved, with federations of Islamic Councils and Muslim Students' Associations (which publish quarterly journals and newsletters), and the number of mosques is increasing. The Order, for its part, is well placed in Australia to make contact with Muslim students, and the Archbishop of Melbourne is encouraging this activity.

Reference: INFORMAZIONI DOMENICANE INTERNAZIONALI, 11th Year No. 1 - 15/I/79.

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TWO FACES OF ISLAM

By C.F. Beckingham

(The professor of Islamic studies at the University of London gives an historical and philosophical background which is important for an understanding of the revolt against the monarchy in Islam.)

The phrase "Islamic republic" is not new but there must be many to whom it seems strange. The history of Islam is usually represented as the history of dynasties of despots, not all necessarily oppressive, but all more or less arbitrary. The idea of a Muslim state without a monarch appears to be a twentieth-century innovation. We may recall the pretentious titles used by rulers like the Ottoman Sultans and the Shahs of Iran: "point of adoration of the world": "King of Kings who are like stars, crown of the royal head, the shadow of the Provider, culmination of kingship, quintessence of the book of fortune, equinoctial line of justice, perfection of the spring-tide of majesty" and so on and on, filling a page or more of official documents. Yet there is a sense in which autocracy as it existed in Byzantium or Tsarist Russia, let alone Nazi Germany, or exists in some African and Latin American countries today, was not merely unknown but impossible in any society that conformed even approximately to the precepts of Islam.

The determining factor is the nature and scope of the Holy Law, which for a devout Muslim regulates his life as much as the Torah, with its rabbinical elaboration, does that of an orthodox Jew. This law is the law of God, communicated to mankind by his prophets, of whom Muhammad was only the last and greatest, and it is immutable and unquestionable. It does not consist simply in ethical injunctions; it includes precise rules about private life and such matters as diet. Like the Jew, the Muslim is forbidden to eat pork and he may not drink wine. He may dispose as he wishes of only a portion of his estate. The exact penalties for breaches of certain provisions of this law are prescribed. They are known as hadd penalties and they include the amputation of the hand for theft and flogging for drinking wine. The Muslim ruler therefore, so far from being absolute, had no true legislative powers at all. He could make administrative regulations on matters outside the scope of the Holy Law but, however much he might neglect to enforce, or even break that law himself, he had no authority whatsoever to change it. One of the few European thinkers to have appreciated this aspect of Islam was Joseph de Maistre. In a remarkable passage in Du Pape he argued that the Ottoman Sultans had in reality less power than European princes, and that people had been deceived by their ability to order summary executions into thinking that they were absolute rulers.

Plural societies

The authority of an Islamic sovereign was not only restricted in this way; his government did not impinge equally on all his subjects. The great Muslim empires, and indeed almost all Muslim states of any size, were plural societies in which different religious communities lived side by side retaining not only their own beliefs but their own systems of

private law. In the Ottoman Empire, where this was known as the millet system and reached perhaps its greatest elaboration a Jew, for instance, who wished to dispute his father's will would have brought his case to a rabbinical court; it would have been decided according to Jewish law and, if need be, the Ottoman authorities would have enforced the court's decision. When in 1878 the British became responsible for the administration of Cyprus in place of the Turks, the Orthodox ecclesiastical hierarchy was dismayed to find that their new rulers were not willing to coerce nominal but reluctant members of the community into paying church dues. In the British view this was a matter of private conscience and defaulters were liable to ecclesiastical, but not to other penalties. The Greek clergy realised that in this respect they had been better off under the Ottomans who had regarded everyone as a member of his particular religious community by whose regulations his life was governed and to which he had obligations enforceable by the state. There was no place for anyone not attached to one of the religious communities; he was treated as an Armenian.

An Islamic state does not, therefore, imply a state whose inhabitants are all adherents of Islam. It does imply a country all of whose subjects, whether Muslims or not, are governed in accordance with Islamic law, which will allow those who follow prophets other than Muhammad to practise their faith, to teach it to their children and to regulate their private lives by its injunctions. Their status naturally varied in practice but in general they paid higher taxes, were exempt from military service, and were in certain respects second-class citizens; thus their testimony was not admissible in evidence against that of a Muslim. They did, however, enjoy the liberties they most valued. It is justly claimed by modern defenders of Islam that it has been a tolerant religion, and that its record is not disfugured by persecutions like those of the Moriscos and Jews in Spain. In fact, persecution of non-Muslims has been rare, local, and temporary, and nearly always the work of mobs rather than of fanatical governments, still less of the doctors of the law, who are the nearest Muslim equivalent to clergy. This may be one of the reasons for the remarkable success of Islamic rule in the territories so rapidly conquered by the Arabs from the Persians and Byzantines in the 7th century. Egypt and Syria had been under European rule, Hellenistic, Roman, or Byzantine, for nearly 1,000 years, and it was certainly not for several centuries that the Muslims in those countries constituted a majority of the population. Under their regime, however, all Christians, and not merely those belonging to the Orthodox Church, were free to practice their religion and be judged by their own courts in matters of private law, something which had not been permitted by the Byzantine emperors. When we remember how great a proportion of the inhabitants of Syria and Egypt were Monophysites the stability of Muslim rule is less surprising.

Unlike Christianity, Islam has from the first stipulated how the Muslim ruler should treat his non-Muslim subjects, for this was a problem that confronted Muhammad himself when he gained control of Medina, where three of the five tribes inhabiting the city were Jewish. On the other hand, Islam has

not often needed to consider the problems peculiar to Muslim subjects of a non-Muslim government. Until the last three centuries there had not been many of these. Islam has not often been a subject religion. At most times and in most countries where there have been Muslims they have been the ruling community. Hardly anywhere except in China, in western Asia for a generation or two after the Mongol conquest, and for nearly a century in the small area conquered by the Crusaders did Muslims have experience of being governed by non-Muslims. The rapid extension of European control over large areas of the Muslim world that began in the 18th century was therefore a traumatic experience, something for which their past experience had not prepared them. Islam was conceivable only as an independent community. It is difficult for Christians and still more for Jews, with their long acquaintance with persecution and subordination, to realise how unnatural the new state of affairs seemed to Muslims, some of whom could regard it only as a token of the impending end of the world. Between the Peace of Karlowitz in 1699 and the end of the first World War the frontiers of Islam receded with increasing rapidity until by 1920 there was no important Muslim state that was not effectively dominated by one of the European powers. Real independence was enjoyed only by a few small and poor countries whose freedom was the reward of their obscurity and their supposed lack of military strength and natural resources.

The reaction to this intolerable position took one of two courses. The first regarded what had occurred as God's punishment for human depravity and advocated a return to the simplicity and strict piety of the life allegedly lived by the first generation of believers in seventh-century Arabia. In different ways the Wahhabis of central Arabia, and the Sanusis of North Africa, exemplified this. They flourished, it will be noticed, in a desert environment in regions which were not disturbed by westerners, other than occasional explorers, until the coming of the oil geologists in more recent times. In such harsh surroundings they were able to live in complete accord with the precepts of the Holy Law and to dispense with most modern inventions, although they did not abjure the rifle. The alternative response was to acknowledge that Islam could learn something from the west, that it needed to do so if it was to regain the independence without which Islam was not Islam, and that there was no reason why pious Muslims should not adopt such western contraptions as were not expressly prohibited by the Holy Law.

In time the Muslims borrowed more and more from the west, if only because limited borrowing proved inadequate. European weapons could not be used without European mathematics; they could not be made without European technology and European industrial organisation. Much of the tension in Islamic countries in the 19th century resulted from disputes about how far Islam could legitimately go in borrowing from the west in order to regain its independence without at the same time ceasing to be truly Islam. The culmination of this tendency was the career of Atatürk, Having begun as a champion of Islam (Ghazi), however much he may have ignored its injunctions in his personal life, he gradually discarded one after another of

its practices and institutions until Turkey was proclaimed a secular republic in which religion was supposed to be entirely a matter of private conscience.

Islam preserved

At this time it seemed that it was the second course of action that offered hope for Muslims, rather than the first. Atatürk himself was successful. He expelled the Greeks, won recognition from the victorious Allies and established a regime which appeared to be progressive, stable and reasonably democratic. Since his death, however, religious, even fanatically religious elements have sometimes shown that their power in the Turkish countryside is still formidable and the country has been threatened with civil war. It is not so much the failures of Atatürk's successors or his imitators, like Reza Shah in Iran and Amanullah in Afghanistan, that have made the fundamentalist alternative seem so much more attractive. The exploitation of oil has brought enormous wealth to certain Islamic states, but mostly to those states which, because of their poverty and isolation, have been able to preserve the traditional way of life intact. It is not Egypt, where Muhammad Ali tried to introduce European education in the early 19th century, but Saudi Arabia, the home of the Wahhabis and states like Kuwait and Abu Dhabi, which now enjoy the influence that money brings. Not long ago these were among the poorest countries in the world. Saudi Arabia's largest source of revenue was the annual pilgrimage to Mecca: the sheikhdoms of the Gulf subsisted on fishing, pearl diving and smuggling. The lives of their people were regulated by the Holy Law. Now it is precisely these states which can afford to pay for Islamic propaganda in the west and which can influence the policy of the industrialised countries through their control of so much of the world's oil reserves. The westernising regimes with their more or less secular centralised systems of government seem to such Muslims to arrogate to themselves the right to interfere in what is properly the domain of God's Law. Islam presupposes the independence of the Muslim community. Resistance to the colonialism of Christian or other non-Muslim powers is predictable. Oil has bestowed the capacity to resist most effectively on countries where the pristine character of Islam has been least modified and where not only western rule but even western ideas of how to rule can be represented as monstrous tyranny.

Reference: THE TABLET, 17th February 1979.

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From 14th May to 9th of June, the Comboniani, Xaverian, the Consolata and the P.I.M.E. Fathers are holding a course of spiritual and cultural formation for priests, brothers and sisters on vacation from the Missions. The course is entitled "Announcing the Gospel to Men of Today". Information can be obtained from Fr. Filippo Commissari, pime, Via F.D.Guerazzi 11 00152, Roma (Tel. 06/58.97.941).

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THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

By
Fr. Arthur McCormack, mhm

On December 10th, 1978, the thirtieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was celebrated. It would be difficult to assess the actual influence which this document has had. Nevertheless it is a standing witness to the ideals of the best of mankind, a torch of civilisation shining in the darkness caused by man's inhumanity to man, by lack of brotherhood.

Throughout history such inhumanity has been the cause of so much suffering and in this century it has reached new depths. On the other hand there has seldom been so much concern as at present for human rights on the part of concerned groups, of political leaders such as President Carter and of religious bodies. The Catholic Church, through Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II has already given inspiring leadership with regard to Human Rights which is backed up in so many concrete circumstances throughout the world by Catholic bishops, priests, religious and laity.

It was natural that the Declaration of Human Rights should be concerned with the rights of men and women in the adult world. It was thought that children would profit by the "spin-off". However, it was gradually realised that children have specific needs, that they need special protection and that in many cases they do not automatically profit by an improvement in the condition of grown men and women. They suffer in a special way from wars and disasters and, sometimes, those who should be their protectors, their parents, by their neglect or even actual cruelty, add to their misery.

Twenty-five years ago, in his Christmas message, Pope Pius XII described the plight of families in the developing world and its effect on children:

> But the most desolate picture is presented by families who have simply nothing. These are families in utter wretchedness; the father without work, the mother watching her children waste away, quite powerless to help them; no food for them, never enough clothes to cover them, and woe to the whole family when sickness makes its dread visitation to the cave now become a dwelling-place for human beings....Not only do whole generations lose physical hardness, but, worse still, they fall into crime and wretched moral depravity.

Conditions have not changed so much since Pius XII wrote this in his Christmas Message in 1952: indeed huge population increase has caused the numbers of such slums to double.

For these reasons a special Declaration of Human Rights of Children was formulated. This Year marks the twentieth Anniversary of that Declaration. This United Nations Declaration solemnly affirms the Rights of the Child:

THE RIGHT

to affection, love and understanding
to adequate nutrition and medical care
to free education
to full opportunity for play and recreation
to a name and nationality
to special care, if handicapped
to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster,
to learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities
to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood
to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin.

The United Nations has designated 1979 as the International Year of the Child to focus attention on the needs of the world's children and on the importance of implementing these Rights.

When the idea was first mooted there was some opposition. Already this decade there have been a number of "Years" with huge world conferences as their highlights costing immense sums of money. 1974 was World Population Year with the first United Nations World Population Conference at Bucharest as a glamourous centrepiece. The Women's Year of 1975 drew attention to the situation of women throughout the world and the fact that many were treated as second-class individuals and citizens. They had their Conference in Mexico City. Then the huge Conference on Human Settlements took place in Vancouver in 1976 where the problems of the cities and the environment were specially studied. Some wondered if the "Years" and especially the vast Conference, had done all that much good and if they were worth the time and the money spent on them.

On balance, however, it was felt that these "Years" and meetings have had a considerable effect in bringing problems to the fore, if not always to a wide public, at least to national leaders.

For example, to many the World Population Conference seemed a confused talking shop with even scientific matters subject to politically motivated votes. Nevertheless, looking back one can see that it really was a watershed. Many countries who had been ignorant or indifferent about the world population problem and their own population situation came to appreciate their position and to take action on these matters. Its great achievement was to establish the double thrust that population should be seen in the context of development and social justice with the corollary that the population factor should be taken into account in development planning.

These "Years' and Conferences gave very little attention to the specific needs of children (offhand I cannot remember if children were even mentioned in the World Population Plan of Action) and therefore it was decided that a special "Year of the Child" really was necessary. Accordingly, by acclamation in December 1976 the nations in the General Assembly accepted 1979 as the International Year of the Child.

But this was to be a Year with a difference. There were to be no great worldwide Conference nor, as the Holy See put it, "a multiplicity of events which have no direct bearing on the welfare of children...but with objectives "of enhancing the awareness of the special needs of children on the part of decision makers and the public...and which advocate "sustained activities for the benefit of children." It was to be a project-oriented year with well-planned schemes to enhance the condition of children world-wide.

In commending the Year at the beginning of November 1978, Pope John Paul referred to the Declaration on the Rights of Children mentioned above, especially the Right that children should be brought up with affection and understanding: therefore, wherever possible, by their parents in the atmosphere of the security which a family gives, where they can learn to appreciate wholesome moral and religious values.

This primary end should always be in mind in the involvement of Catholics and others who have at heart the complete development of the child's personality as well as his material progress and freedom from material deprivation.

But as the latter is often a hindrance to the former ideal much of the Year of the Child will concentrate on other rights which are often neglected or ignored in the world's trouble spots and even in so-called normal conditions. The acute poverty of many in the developing world often means, as we have seen, that parents are unable to translate their love of their children into the nourishing and nurturing which a child needs.

Affluence also brings its problems to children of developed countries and they are sometimes physically abused, morally corrupted, exploited by purveyors of drugs or merchants of pornography.

There is, therefore, the need to be concerned with all children in the world, but also with the child as a whole. Basic human needs must be met but psychological, moral and social issues in our rapidly changing world affect the child as well as and partly through its parents.

The idea of the Year came originally from Non-Governmental Agencies connected with the U.N. and such agencies, together with other specialised bodies will be working together with Governments, sometimes as agents of Governments, to promote the ideals of the Year which we have described and to sponsor concrete projects to help the child.

The Year is first and foremost oriented towards countries. They have been invited to consider seriously the situation in their country and then to define priority needs as they actually exist. That is why all governments have been invited to set up National Commissions and why they are so important. These Commissions will be the main means of arousing and increasing awareness by providing information and by stimulating action.

It is very important to note that the Year has been planned and organised for the welfare of <u>children only</u> (as distinct from young people and adolescents) and those who are

living (as distinct from the unborn). There is a deliberate policy to avoid marginal aspects that might cause ideological and political differences which would impede this positive goal. This is a big step forward - at the Bucharest Conference the Chinese and Russians aired their border dispute and engaged in slanging matches remote from the subject of the Conference.

Here it may be useful to point out that those organizations who see the problems of children in the context of whether they will be born or not (and some organisations have already jumped on the bandwaggon to use the Year to forward their Pro-life or Pro-abortion objectives), are completely out of order. It would be little short of disastrous - and not, I am sure intended by either party - that the positive aims to be of service to the millions of children who already exist in miserable circumstances should be jeopardised by illegitimately dragging in such issues. However, the Year gives an excellent opportunity to Pro-Life groups here and in the United States to show that they are <u>really</u> in favour of Life, i.e., they have concern for the quality of life of the children who are born, some possibly because of their efforts. They should not have the image of ceasing to care after the moment of birth.

There is not space here to go into the details of the organisation of and preparations for the Year. UNICEF and the U.N. I.Y.C. Secretariat have their role to play with regard to governments; there is also a Non-Governmental Organisations/ International Year of the Child Secretariat of which Canon Joseph Moerman is Chairman which has the same role vis à vis Non-Governmental Organisations. I had the privilege of attending the first meeting in Geneva on April 3rd and 4th 1978, and I was struck by the number and variety of representatives of the bodies who were specifically concerned with supporting the Year. Mrs. Estefania Aldabar-Lim, Assistant Secretary General of the U.N. and Special Representative of the I.Y.C. and many representatives of the various United Nations agencies and in particular from the I.Y.C.Secretariat, attended the whole Session. There it was realised that the number of programmes being developed by NGO's for the IYC is constantly growing, that most NGO's are aware of the importance of setting up concrete programmes concerning identifiable needs and that it is not sufficient to make hollow declarations or simply declarations of their intentions. It was extremely encouraging to see that among the 120 participants representing all ideological tendencies, there was little or no tension or misunderstanding. If, in the months to come, the activities for the Year can be developed in the spirit that was present at the Plenary Session of the NGO/IYC Committee, it will certainly be possible to attain the main objectives of the Year.

This Plenary Session also revealed that many organizations which up till now have not developed programmes specifically for children, have pledged themselves to do so at the occasion of the IYC. Others which have for some time been involved in specialised action for children, have decided to broach new and wider fields of activity. Without attempting to give a complete list of the programmes undertaken, here are a few headings or areas of interest under which a fair number of

these programmes could be grouped:

concern for the most disadvantaged;

concern for the handicapped child and more particularly all types of stigmata;

checking up on the actual application of the recognised principles of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child;

the numerous harmful effects that environment has on the child, whether this be physical, psychological or emotional environment;

a desire to make parents more aware of the complexity of their role as educators of the child;

an effort towards education for peace;

All this brings us to the obvious conclusion that, between now and the end of 1979, we shall witness a vast mobilisation of material and intellectual resources for the benefit of the child. It is already clear that this Year will have an impact on the future and this is a happy prospect. It would be a dreadful shame if the end of 1979 were to see the end of activities developed for the International Year of the Child. On the contrary this Year will be the launching pad that will project efforts towards the Horizon 2000 so that from now on children may live in the hope of becoming happy men and women in a more peaceful world.

Children do suffer most in disaster situations, especially refugee situations. It is heartrending to see, as we do almost daily now on our television screens the plight of the "boat people" and frightened children just as it is heartening to see some of these children rescued, adopted and happily settled down. One of the big objectives of the Year is taken up with Refugee children. The horrible fact is that 50% of the world's refugees are children as the Ideas Forum// points out. Already a catalogue of assistance for refugee children has been compiled country by country. Incidentally this illustrates the practical nature of the Year.

Another great practical goal of the Year is the provision of health services with special care for children so that in the foreseeable future no child should be out of reach of special medical care. Much of the Year will be taken up with fund raising for such projects.

The Church, both locally and on the international level will surely wish to play a great part in the Year. The Church has made so many stands for Human Rights that it would be very fitting for her to highlight the rights of the most vulnerable and the most powerless-children. This might be the most powerful antidote to the principle that seems to be creeping in to many aspects of human life, and not only revolution situations, that "might is right" and that any use of power is justified so long as it is effective and directed to eradicating perceived injustice. The Christian Church has the greatest motive for being on the side of children for its Founder said "Suffer little children to come unto me...for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.." And it is the Church who can speak out when abuses such as using children as shields in terrorist activity, training them to use guns in whatever

cause as soon as they can hold one, being trained to hate instead of love and being forcibly removed from their homes for this purpose as soon as they can understand, and remind the world of the terrible words of our gentle Saviour:

> "But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith in me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone round his neck." (Matt. 18:6).

Truly this Year is not just another Year. It would make the difference between happiness and misery, between a good life and a horrible one, for millions of children.

//See the excellent IYC Ideas Forum, Supplement 5, on Refugee Children available from U.N. Commission for Refugees Centre William Rappard CH. 1202, Geneva, Switzerland.

Note: For those who are interested in the British effort the IYC Secretariat, 85 Whitehall, London SW1 has excellent material and would welcome enquiries.

Also available: 1/883 Population and the Child by Arthur McCormack, mhm. (6)

1/884 CAFOD and the International Year of the Child, by Arthur McCormack, mhm.

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ANNEE INTERNATIONALE DE L'ENFANT PROJET INTERNATIONAL DE FILMS TELEVISES

A l'occasion de sa 31ème session, l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies a déclaré l'année 1979 "Année internationale de l'enfant". Consciente des problèmes des enfants et des jeunes, grâce aux efforts constants qu'elle déploie dans le monde entier dans le domaine de l'éducation, l'Unesco se propose de promouvoir dans l'opinion publique une compréhension plus large et plus approfondie des enfants du monde entier par le biais d'un programme visant à sensibiliser les adultes aux réalité de l'enfance.

L'Unesco se propose de contribuer à l'Année internationale de l'enfant en coordonnant la production d'une série de films 16 mm couleur, d'une durée approximativement égale à 55 minutes, qui seront diffusés tout au long de l'année 1979 par les organismes de télévision les plus importants. Jusqu'à ce jour, de nombreux pays ont manifesté leur intérêt et l'intention de participer à ce programme. Il s'agit des organismes de télévision de la Belgique, de l'Iran, du Brésil, de l'Espagne, de la France, de la Hongrie, de l'Italie, du Japon, de la Grande-Bretagne, de la Norvège et du Canada.

Chacun de ces organismes assurera la production d'un film, qu'il mettra ensuite à la disposition des organismes coopérants. Ces films seront diffusés par les organismes nationaux de télevision, en liaison avec l'Unesco.

Reference: LE MOIS A L'UNESCO, No. 90-91 - Juillet-Décembre, 1978.

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